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DAYS AND HOURS

BY

FREDERICK TENNYSON.

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FREDERICK TENNYSON

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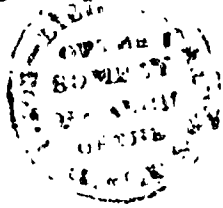

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THE BIRTH OF THE YEAR.

I.

Let us speak low, the Infant is asleep,
The frosty hills grow sharp, the Day is near,
And Phosphor with his taper comes to peep
Into the cradle of the newborn Year;
Hush! the infant is asleep,
Monarch of the Day and Night,
Whisper, yet it is not light,
The infant is asleep.

II.

Those arms shall crush great serpents, ere to-morrow
His closed eyes shall wake to laugh and weep;
His lips shall curl with mirth, and writhe with sorrow
And charm up Truth and Beauty from the Deep:
Softly, softly let us keep
Our vigils, visions cross his rest,
Prophetic pulses stir his breast,
Although he be asleep.

III.

Now Love and Death arm'd in his presence wait;
Genii with lamps are standing at the door;
Oh! he shall sing sweet songs, he shall relate
Wonder, and glory, and hopes untold before:
Murmur memories that may creep
Into his ears of Eld sublime;
Let the youngestborn of Time
Hear music in his sleep.

IV.

Quickly he shall awake, the East is bright,
And the hot glow of the unrisen Sun
Hath kiss'd his brow with promise of its light,
His cheek is red with victory to be won:
Quickly shall our King awake,
Strong as giants, and arise;
Sager than the old and wise
The Infant shall awake.

V.

His childhood shall be froward, wild, and thwart,
His gladness fitful, and his angers blind,
But tender spirits shall o'ertake his heart,
Sweet tears, and golden moments bland and kind:
He shall give delight and take,
Charm, enchant, dismay, and soothe,
Raise the dead, and touch with youth;
Oh! sing that he may wake!

VI.

Where is the sword to gird upon his thigh?
Where is his armour and his laurel crown?
For he shall be a Conqueror ere he die,
And win him kingdoms wider than his own;
Like the earthquake he shall shake
Cities down, and waste like fire,
Then build them stronger, pile them higher,
When he shall awake.

VII.

In the dark spheres of his unclosed eyes
The sheathed lightnings lie, and clouded stars,
That shall glance softly, as in Summer skies,
Or stream o'er thirsty deserts wing'd with wars;
For in the pauses of dread hours
He shall fling his armour off,
And like a reveller sing and laugh,
And dance in ladies' bowers.

VIII.

Ofttimes in his midsummer he shall turn
To look on the dead Spring with weeping eyes,
O'er ashes of frail Beauty stand and mourn,
And kiss the bier of stricken Hope with sighs;
Ofttimes like light of onward seas
He shall hail great days to come,
Or hear the first dread note of doom
Like torrents on the breeze.

IX.

His manhood shall be blissful and sublime
With stormy sorrows and serenest pleasures,
And his crown'd age upon the top of Time
Shall throne him, great in glories, rich in treasures;
The Sun is up, the Day is breaking,
Sing ye sweetly, draw anear;
Immortal be the newborn year,
And blessed be its waking!

SONG OF AN OLD MAN.

I.

THOUGH Winter yet be not o'er-past,
The breath of Spring steals o'er the lea;
Is it in mercy unto me
April, thou comest in such haste?

II.

Ah! gentle friend, I would behold
Thy fair young face, thy tender tears,
In thy soft voice my spirit hears
Itself speak cheerly, as of old.

III.

When ere the dawn I wake and weep,
To think of hearts that beat no more,
And cruel memories haunt me sore,
Come thou, and through my lattice creep.

IV.

And murmuring in the ivy leaves
Waken the early morning bird,
Whose mirth, by the first daylight stirr'd,
Sings to me from beneath the eaves.

V.

Oh! the first snowdrop let me see,
The first young primrose laughing out;
When the rathe violet sheds about
Its magic soul, bear that to me.

VI.

When in their hearts thy life is born,
The young man laughs, the young girl sighs,
And love in light of their blue eyes
Moves, as in heaven the star of Morn.

VII.

Wild horses run in valleys wide,
The deer leaps up in oaken glade,
The lion from his rocky shade
Roars, and runs down the mountain side.

VIII.

When thy swift life moves in their blood
Like lightning, lo! the strong arise,
And do great deeds, and o'er the wise
Roll godlike visions like a flood.

IX.

The Poet bares his suffering brows
Unto thee, and his voice is heard
Mingling with song of tree and bird,
Like God's beneath the garden boughs.

X.

But I am old, and in my breast
The embers of the ancient fire
Flame not again at my desire—
Oh! I am old, and crave but rest.

XI.

Lead me a little in the sun
Kind hand of maid, or loving child;
My tears the light of Heaven shall gild
Until my wintry day be done;

XII.

Though in my heart the voice of Spring
With its bright flowers and carols clear,
Tells me not of the passing year,
And the new life in everything;

XIII.

But takes me back where lie inurn'd
The ashes of imperial joys,
Discrowned hopes with quenched eyes,
Great passions with their torches burn'd.

XIV.

Some spirit out of darkness brings,
And sets upon their ancient thrones
The scatter'd monumental bones
Of thoughts that were as mighty kings.

XV.

Some voice thrills in mine ear like breath
Of virgin song, and fair young Love
Is seen his golden plumes to move
Over the dim gray land of Death.

XVI.

My heart is like a temple dim,
Down whose long aisles the moonlight floats
And sad celestial organ notes
Hover, like wings of Cherubim,

XVII.

Touch'd by some unseen hand, around
The marble figures of the Dead;
But at this hour no living tread
Is heard, no disenchanting sound.

FIRST OF MARCH.

I.

THRO' the gaunt woods the winds are shrilling cold,
Down from the rifted rack the sunbeam pours
Over the cold gray slopes, and stony moors;
The glimmering watercourse, the eastern wold,
And over it the whirling sail o' the mill,
The lonely hamlet with its mossy spire,
The piled city smoking like a pyre,
Fetch'd out of shadow gleam with light as chill.

II.

The young leaves pine, their early promise stay'd;
The Hope-deluded sorrow at the sight
Of the sweet blossoms by the treacherous light
Flatter'd to death, like tender love betray'd;
And stepdames frown, and aged virgins chide;
Relentless hearts put on their iron mood;
The hunter's dog lies dreaming of the wood,
And dozes barking by the ingle-side.

III.

Larks twitter, martens glance, and curs from far
Rage down the wind, and straight are heard no more;
Old wives peep out, and scold, and bang the door;
And clanging clocks grow angry in the air;
Sorrow and care, perplexity and pain
Frown darker shadows on the homeless one,
And the gray beggar buffeting alone
Pleads in the howling storm, and pleads in vain.

IV.

The field-fires smoke along the champaign drear,
And drive before the north wind streaming down
Bleak hill, and furrow dark, and fallow brown;
Few living things along the land appear;
The weary horse looks out, his mane astray,
With anxious fetlock, and uneasy eye,
And sees the market-carts go madly by
With sidelong drivers reckless of the way.

V.

The sere beech-leaves, that trembled dry and red
All the long Winter on the frosty bough,
Or slept in quiet underneath the snow,
Fly off, like resurrections of the dead;
The horny ploughman, and his yoked ox,
Wink at the icy blasts; and beldames bold,
Stout, and red-hooded, flee before the cold;
And children's eyes are blinded by the shocks.

VI.

You cannot hear the waters for the wind;
The brook that foams, and falls, and bubbles by,
Hath lost its voice—but ancient steeples sigh,
And belfries moan—and crazy ghosts, confined
In dark courts, weep, and shake the shuddering gates,
And cry from points of windy pinnacles,
Howl thro' the bars, and 'plain among the bells,
And shriek, and wail like voices of the Fates!

VII.

And who is He, that down the mountain-side,
Swift as a shadow flying from the sun,
Between the wings of stormy Winds doth run,
With fierce blue eyes, and eyebrows knit with pride;
Though now and then I see sweet laughters play
Upon his lips, like moments of bright heaven
Thrown 'twixt the cruel blasts of morn and even,
And golden locks beneath his hood of gray?

VIII.

Sometimes he turns him back to wave farewell
To his pale Sire with icy beard and hair;
Sometimes he sends before him thro' the air
A cry of welcome down a sunny dell;
And while the echoes are around him ringing,
Sudden the angry wind breathes low and sweet,
Young violets show their blue eyes at his feet,
And the wild lark is heard above him singing!

HOPE.

I.

ANGELS of beauty are abroad to-day,
And ministers of bliss; the Winds are sleeping,
And thro' a thin-wove veil of silvery gray
The Sun is like a timid lover peeping,
Where Hope in her own garden stands and sings,
And gazing upward hears the skylark chiming
Wild response to her song, and with his wings
Swift measure to his eager music timing.

II.

She sang, 'They say that I am false as fair,
That these blue eyes are fickle, vain this breath,
Mine idle aims impalpable as air,
My life a lie, and all its triumphs death;
For when I clutch the amaranth flower of Joy,
Wealth's golden urn, the laurels of the Muse,
Joy, Wealth, and Fame may live, but Hope I die,
Like rainbows follow'd thro' their own sweet dews.

III.

'Thankless are they: who arms the heart of Youth?
Who fires the lover's song, the hero's eye?
Who breathes the hermit's prayer, the martyr's truth?
Who makes it bliss to live, and peace to die?
Thankless are they, and heed not what they say,
There is no armour against ill but mine;
When Beauty, Strength, and Youth are fled away,
The living light within mine eyes doth shine.

IV.

'These limbs can be a giant's in their might,
This still small voice a trumpet clear and loud,
These tearful orbs, that tremble in the light,
Strong as an eagle's soaring through a cloud;
I raise the fond eyes, and the listening ears
Of babes to their first friend; I meet the frown
Of the last Enemy full-arm'd with fears,
I give him battle, and I cast him down.'

V.

But, while she spoke, a shadow o'er the plain
Swept softly, and she turn'd, and there, there lay
The wondrous arch, built up of sun and rain,
And dyed the far-off woods in hues of May;
She ran in haste to scale those steps of fire;
The weeping Iris, jealous of her eyes,
Drew back her ladder, lest Hope should aspire
Earth-born to mount unbidden to the skies.

VI.

Where are the glories that she saw from far?
There is no beauty, but the frown instead
Of angry Winter arm'd again for war,
Grim, with blown mantle, o'er the mountain-head.
Her eyes were fill'd with tears, her heart beat fast,
The dewy drops shower'd round her as she came;
Homeward she bent her jocund steps at last,
And laugh'd with mirth, the while she blush'd with shame.

VII.

Lightly she stepp'd, and lo ! beyond the shade
Of the gray storm she saw the sunny lea,
Like an empyreal shore, that seem'd to fade
In the far azure ether like a Sea ;
And stream, and lawn, steep wood, and templed town,
Flash'd forth like isles of glory ; and she sung—
'So do my blisses lie beyond the frown
Of envious Time, my heart is ever young.'

VIII.

She sang—'I'll take the eagle's wings, and scale
The mighty walls that stand against the sky ;
I'll take the crescent Moon, and softly sail
Upon the winding amber streams that lie
Betwixt the clouds ; I'll take a beam and run
Up to the diamond gates of Paradise ;
I'll peep behind the curtains of the Sun,
And see the fountains of the Day arise.'

IX.

Far o'er the woods, into the midst of Morn,
Ceasing her song, she turn'd her straining sight,
And the pale mountains on their fronts forlorn,
Caught her warm smile, and laugh'd with sudden light;
The Sun flash'd forth in answer to her smile,
And fill'd the World with radiant ecstacies;
Then to her garden flowers she turn'd awhile,
Pansies, and violets, like her own blue eyes.

TO APRIL.

I.

APRIL, April, child of Mirth
And Sorrow, sweetest face on earth,
Oh ! but to name thee fills mine ears
With songs, mine eyes with pleasant tears ;
For so thou wert when I was young,
And call'd thee with a lisping tongue,
So wilt thou be when I am old,
And Loves and Fears alike are cold.

II.

Though others change, thou wilt not change ;
But alway something swift and strange
Like shadows follow'd by the sun
From thee across my heart shall run ;
While the tender breath from thee
Sheds life o'er turf and forest tree,
Pours lovenotes thro' the valleys lone,
And brings me back the swallow flown.

III.

To pale sad Grief thy presence seems
A shape of light in mist of dreams;
Thou singest into the ears of Joy,
He shakes his locks, the enchanted boy;
And the clouds soar up, and pile
The Vast with silver hill and isle,
Or under golden arches run
Great rivers pouring from the Sun!

IV.

Oft as I mark thee stepping thro'
The mist, thy fair hair strung with dew,
Or by the great stair of the Dawn
Come down o'er river, croft, and lawn,
Thy sun and cloud-inwoven vest
Rippling its skirts from East to West,
And glancing on the breeze and light
Dash the wildflowers left and right.

V.

Oft as in moments soft and fair
Under the clear and windless air
Thou sleepest, and thy breathings low
In blissful odours come and go;
Oft as in moments proud and wild
Thou spoilest, like a froward child,
The blossoms thou hast just laid on,
And laughest when the ill is done.

VI.

Oft as I see thee run and leap
From gusty peaks—or stand and weep
Tears, like Memory's that distil
Hopes of Good thro' days of Ill;
And the peaceful rainbow hides
The thunders on the mountain-sides
With its banner, or in the vale
Robes in rich light the poplars pale.

VII.

While thy mavis, blythe and boon,
Cheers the morn and afternoon
With happy melodies, that seem
To turn to sound the sunny beam;
Or the nightingale apart,
Flashes from his human heart
Like earthborn lightning, ceaselessly,
Anguish, Hope, and Victory!

VIII.

In southern isles, where thro' balm shades,
The moonlight glides o'er colonnades
Of marble—and the waters gush
In tuneful tears amid the hush
Of budding bowers, that silently
Slope thro' pale glory to the sea,
And in the calm and midnight dim
Seem listening to that threefold hymn.

IX.

April, April, child of Mirth
And Sorrow, sweetest face on earth,
Oh! had I such bright notes to make
The wildwoods listen for thy sake;
Oh! had I spells to make my pains
My glory, like thy sun-lit rains,
My days a rainbow's arch, to climb
Far off from tears, and clouds of Time!

MAYDAY.

I.

THE morn was restless, soft, yet bright,
With dewy airs, that shook the light
In golden stars among the green;
We saw the tufted woodlands lean
With murmurs to the winsome wind,
The mountains rose up glad behind;
Before, a viny valley ran
Seaward, and met the purple plain
Bright with towers, and thick with gloom
Of gardens, clouded in perfume
Of blossoms breathing their own clime;
O! happy day, the best of Time!
The linnets sang of love and glee,
And sang it to my love and me.

I sate beside her in the light of May,
And the blue Heaven reflected in her eyes
Might have drawn down the Gods of that sweet day
To change for them their own midsummer skies;
Wrapt in the glory of a blissful madness
I took no heed how sped the hours, not I—
For each sweet moment measureless in gladness
Itself became an Immortality!

II.

The clouds flew by like worlds of glory,
With peak, and cape, and promontory,
And towers of diamond, and of gold,
And my heart triumph'd to behold
Their mountains rend, and issue forth
Illumined torrents to the earth,
And like huge stairs, the great sunbeam
Slope 'twixt our world and isles of dream;
O happy Isles! whereon to sail
With her, as in a fairytale,

And touch at shores of moon and star,
And sound the Ocean-light afar,
Seem'd to us in that charmed noon
A joy that might be real soon!

I took my dear love fondly by the hand,
And gazing in her eyes forgetfully,
Quaff'd that deep bliss they only understand
Whose hearts' twin thoughts make up one harmony.
I cried—'If Death should bid both me and thee,
This hour, that comes from Heaven, too sweet to last,
Dear heart, is flown into Futurity,
'Twill meet us there—it is not of the Past!'

III.

A stately Shape, a Giant-God,
Upon a steep cloud-island stood,
Betwixt us and the Sun he tower'd,
And on each hand the splendors shower'd
Past him, like javelins from him thrown;
Stream'd thro' the tall points of his crown;

And from his hair, and lifted hand,
Glanced downward over sea and land,
And upward to the cope of all,
A sight to gladden, not appal;
He stood upon the golden prow
Of that bright island, sailing slow,
And with sweet smile, and outstretch'd arm,
He bade us welcome there from harm.

We sang together—(and the winged joy
Clave like a banner the soft azure air
Waved in the sight of Him that cannot die)
'Beloved, O beloved, we can dare
Together aught that angry Time can fling
Out of his quiver: for this hour, we vow,
Shall stretch its arms, like an all-conquering King;
To Past and Future, while it lifts us now!'

IV.

Sometimes the wild breeze swung asunder
The boughs—and show'd the World of wonder—

Hamlet, and town, and pasture green
With roads of sunlight laid between;
And shook the streams to stars—and clove
The thickets flooding from above;
And ran along the valley plain,
Showering it o'er with blossom-rain;
And from the bower wherein we sate—
Like beauty snatch'd away by Fate—
A white Rose from its stem was blown
Into her bosom like its own,
She gather'd the strown leaves again,
And thus she spoke 'twixt joy and pain:

'If we shall live till our dark locks are gray,
While love remains, beloved, why repine?
Oh! rather draw from out our life to-day
More joy, like theirs who sip the rarest wine;
O'er ills to be, unwise is he who mourns;
And, Hope grown blind, let Memory take her throne;
And let our old hearts taste, like fragrant urns
That breathe of flowers, the blisses that are gone.'

V.

At Noon beneath its folded wings
The wild Breeze slept—upon all things
Lay dreamy stillness without stir,
All but the chirking Grasshopper;
The clouds hung in the purple skies
At anchor, like great argosies;
The poplars flitter'd not—the streams
Were bridged by long, calm golden gleams,
The Sun athirst drank the last drops
Of dew, and drew from flowery slopes
Rich breaths, that wafted not away;
We sigh'd amid the fervent day,
But in the hush she looked on me;
We heard the roaring of the Sea!

She whisper'd—'When our cup is brimm'd with joy,
And Fortune throws us Pleasures never ceasing,
When moments without shadow pass us by,
And Honor is a tide each day increasing,

Oh! while we hear soft songs, and breathing flowers
Sit at the noonday banquet flown with mirth,
Then let us sometimes hark the coming Hours,
And the great Voices calling to the Earth!'

VI.

Up from the lawn, O happy sight!
A fountain leapt into the light,
Like life into the air it sprung,
With subtle change, and waving song,
And robed itself, like Youth with joys,
In restless lightnings, and its voice,
Rising and falling with the wind,
Spoke like a Spirit's to the mind,
Now tender, as a gush of tears,
Now like a storm it fill'd our ears,
Now circling a sweet phantasy,
With music, like a symphony,
Now filling up, in tenderest wise,
Our own love-pauses with love-sighs.

She with divine eyes looking into mine
Rain'd down her sovran beauty's starry dew,
That dropt upon my heart, like fiery wine,
Kindling the quenchless thirst it would subdue:
But in the purest moment of those joys,
Grief cross'd her like a shadow at noonday,
I saw a tear come over her blue eyes,
I heard her sadly sigh, then softly say:

VII.

'When Love itself'—meanwhile a breath
Crept o'er the champaign, chill as Death;
Thunders had lifted in the West
Their banners, and the shadow prest
Onward, like plumed foes that stride
With soundless arms the mountainside;
Like coming Fate they spread their wings—
The merry bird no longer sings;
First silence—then a rushing wind—
And twilight like an evil Mind—

The forests bow'd, the blossoms whirl'd,
Bright fragments from the fountain hurl'd,
And the bower that tented o'er our seat
Scatter'd its roseleaves at our feet.
'When Love itself, which is the flower of Time
Embalming the void hours, and days, and years,
Spreading its richest hues in Sorrow's clime,
And underneath the wintry dew of tears
Yielding its rarest essence—not the less
Woundeth his peace, upon whose heart it lies,
With one sharp pang itself cannot redress,
The fear to lose the bliss itself supplies.

VIII.

'But, O beloved, fly O fly,'
She shriek'd, 'for Death is in the sky:'
From far we saw the tempest pale,
Lashing the earth with wind and hail,
And giant battlements, that launch'd
Thunders, that shook the ground, and glanced

Fiery shafts along the gloom;
The scared birds fled as from their doom;
Under the arched bower I led
Her steps, and back she turn'd her head,
And on the edge of the storm-shade
Lo! one pale beam, like Hope dismay'd;
And with wild eyes along the plain
She look'd, and sigh'd, and said again:

'Alas! for Love—what anodyne shall close
The hidden pangs of such immortal pains;
Time points the thorn, as he unfolds the rose,
When Death hath shed the leaves, the thorn remains;
Alas! for Love—the honey that he brings
Leaves bitterness—the arrows that he speeds
Return upon him with avenging stings,
He thinks to wound, and 'tis himself who bleeds.'

IX.

The last pale beam is drawn to Heaven;
And swiftly o'er the land is driven

The Uragan, like smoke of War,
From mountainpeak to sandy shore:
The hills are dark, the earth is gray,
All creatures fly the selfsame way,
Floods swell the thunder, and the herd
And herdsman with one fear are stirr'd,
The lightning fires the rick and farm,
Red flames roar onward with the storm,
And cries, and wails, and dismal knells
Mingle, as the tumult swells,
Towers crash, and granite mountains craze,
And Fear beholds the end of days!

Lowly we murmur'd—'Oh! if thou, or I,
By evil days henceforth be overtaken,
If Sorrow frown upon us from on high,
Or either by the other be forsaken,
Ah! let us not forget, though dark the path
And lit with lightnings only, until Even,
To pass with faith beneath the cloud of wrath,
And that their light is still a light from Heaven.'

X.

She wept—I bade her turn and see
The life that broke o'er lift and lea;
Like warriors struggling to unfold
The bands of sleep, the Mountains roll'd
Back their storm mantles, and display'd
Far flashings, as of royal state;
'Mid sheeny leaves the rivulets shone,
Broad rivers lighten'd in the sun;
And blander breath began to sway
Greenwood, and lawn, and garden gay;
A million sweet notes bubbled thro'
Warm ether, like melodious dew;
Again the Giant on the cloud
Stood gazing upward, glad and proud!

Ah! then I answered, 'Let us think no more;
Such thoughts are treason 'gainst the throne of Joy;
I take no heed, not I, of less or more,
Of Life and Time, while thou, sweet Soul, art by;

As Death shall come, 'twere better so to die!
Let Lovers quaff Life's moments of sweet weather,
While the Sun laughs, and the Midnoon is high,
Live while they may, and pray to die together.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

I.

Two Sisters in a honeysuckle shade,
Sat singing the same song—each slender waist
Was by the other's loving arm embraced,
Their mingled hearts the selfsame motion made;
Their downy cheeks against each other leaning,
Each on the other warmer ruby laid;
Their clustering locks, the same gold lustre sheening,
Rain'd o'er their necks from many a loosed braid.

II.

They sang of mirth perennial as the clime
Afar, where all the year is Summer weather;
Of fortunes shared, misfortunes wept together;
Of constancy inflexible as Time;

Of unborn daughters wed to unborn heirs;
Their love begun in childhood never ending;
And bright-hair'd, blue-eye'd beauty such as theirs,
Thro' the unnumber'd generations blending.

III.

Their blessed voices made such deep accord
That twin seem'd one—alas! that very morn
Truth changed to Slander, Love was shrunk to Scorn;
And they were sunder'd by an idle Lord:
A jealous Fury sow'd their hearts with sighs;
No more they sate, or walk'd, or sang together;
Their very beauty died within their eyes,
Like timeless blossoms which the frost winds wither!

IV.

Two angry striplings—each a burning son
And heir of Vengeance, at a banquet sate,
And pouring hot wine on their ancient hate,
Rail'd at each other, as their sires had done;

And from amid the appalled guests they stood,
With hands that lighten'd steel, and eyes of flame,
Till lips grew pale for fear their stormy blood
With fiercer drops should put the wine to shame!

V.

'Hold back,' they cried, 'were not our fathers foes,
And theirs before them? how shall we be friends?
To us the heritage of Hate descends,
Life born in strife, and war unto its close:'
Two sisters came, and drew those foes apart—
Each bound her brother's foe with her own charms,
Each to the fetters link'd her brother's heart,
And waged his battle with enchanted arms!

VI.

Again two pledged their faith to one another—
'We will be friends,' they said, 'while life endures,
In wealth, or penury, or amid the lures
Of Syren tongues—for each shall have a brother

Whose voice shall win him from the subtlest spell
Of all their song:' they said, and swore an oath—
Vain armour for true hearts that loved so well—
But Love and Fate look'd down, and laugh'd at both!

VII.

And lo! a damsel with a scornful brow
Lean'd from a lattice, as they pass'd beneath;
That day they were forsworn—their mutual breath
Was cursing, till one laid the other low;
Yet neither did possess her, for she died
Loving a third, but never was his mate:
Grave on their sepulchres, Love, Hate, and Pride—
Blind Nature, and unconquerable Fate!

AMBITION.—No. I.

I.

When pale Ambition was a dark-hair'd boy,
He said—'My green and quiet native vale
Is the dear cradle of my heart's best joy;
But oh! methinks what bliss it were to scale
Yon peak that seems as soft as Hope afar,
Crown'd with the sunrise, or the morning star!

II.

What joy to climb the adamantine stair
That soars above the World—to feel the gale
Ruffle my breast, and scatter back my hair;
To rush into the rains, and lightnings pale,
And from amid the whirlwinds to arise
Into the azure calm, and golden skies.

III.

The Angel of the Tempest heard his prayer,
And with a sudden darkness fill'd the day,
And snatch'd him up into the flaming air
Out of the Summer bower wherein he lay,
Thro' terrors, and thro' tumult, and the sound
Of thunders, and of winds that roll'd around.

IV.

He rested not—all day he mounted higher—
The lightnings smote him, and his eyes grew dim;
He saw the everlasting peaks aspire
Skyward, and vast—but still no rest for him!
The morning pass'd—the midday follow'd soon—
Still the high peaks rose up into the sun!

V.

Earthward he look'd, and thro' a chasm of cloud
He saw his valley, and its homes beneath
Shrunk to a span—and then his heart grew proud,
Swifter he flew, and reach'd the realms of Death;

The mid-day sank into the afternoon,
Still the high peaks rose up into the sun!

VI.

The evening came—and when the heavens grew fair,
From far they saw him wearily and slow
With scared eyes, sad aspect, and torn hair,
Descend—the thunders branded on his brow;
But to his ancient ones he spoke no more;
He could not hear the tongues he loved before.

VII.

Women went forth to meet him with a song,
And brought him simple fruits, fresh-gather'd flowers;
And children led him, as he came along,
Into the shelter of his own sweet bowers:
Alas! that valley with its homesteads kind
He could behold no more,—for he was blind!

AMBITION.—No. II.

I.

LIKE one who meets affliction with disdain,
The Sun from underneath the Thunder's wing
Look'd angry red, and past imagining
Threw glory o'er the mountains and the main,
A dying Conqueror in battle slain!

II.

An aged Fisher sat upon the shore,
And gazed toward the sunset, and the moan
Of gathering tempest mingled with the roar
Of the waste seas, and in his eyes there shone
The dying ardors that he gazed upon.

III.

He cast his gray locks back, he raised his head,
And when he saw the lightning flashes break,
And heard the first note of the thunder speak,
'I come to strive with ye alone,' he said,
'My eyes are dim, my spirit is not dead.'

IV.

For I remember the triumphant morn,
When first I ventured on the stormy realm
Of the great Deep; alone I took the helm,
And spread the sail despite of warning scorn,
And far upon the dark seas was I borne.

V.

By many a Siren islet free and bold,
O'er rock, and shoal, and surge I safely rode,
And found new lands, and shores by giants trod,
Led by the star that only I behold,
And shall I yield because my limbs are old?

VI.

Let others praise young deeds that were their own,
And sit with dames beneath the evening sun;
My heart is strong altho' my strength be done,
So I will lift the anchor, and be gone,
And on my own wild waves I will go down!

VII.

He rose still mighty, and they heard him say—
'Let the winds tear me, and the storm infold,
What care I, so that Men and Gods behold;'
He spread his sail against the dying day,
And in the frowning twilight sail'd away.

TWO TRAVELLERS.

I.

TRUTH and Beauty throned afar
On sun-illumined mountain-spires,
Each crowned with a fixed star,
Look'd down where men in misery war
With men, and their desires;

II.

Far off the flames of Battle shone,
And from the plains and valleys under
The dust of Ruin upward blown
Hung grim, while Citadels o'erthrown
Went down with burst of thunder.

III.

And thro' the twilight of dread years,
Proud threats were hurl'd, wild shrieks were driven;
Voices of agonies, and fears,
Vain lamentations, angry tears,
And curses rose to Heaven.

IV.

To East and West, to South and North,
They turn'd, and of that multitude
Two only out of all the Earth
Thro' fire, and smoke, and clouds look'd forth
In search of something good.

V.

One in a broider'd vesture came
Gaily with songs, his steps were fleet,
For under that light garb a flame
Burn'd in his heart no fear could tame,
And wing'd his naked feet.

VI.

The fashion of his limbs was slight,
But he could leap, and he could run;
Strong, as an eagle's, was his sight,
And he could look at lightning-light,
And gaze upon the sun.

VII.

The other, strong of heart and limb,
Had borne the shocks of Winter storms;
No watching made his eyesight dim,
No peril was too vast for him,
No toil subdued his arms.

VIII.

A wondrous charmed rod had he,
Which told him where deep treasures lay;
In midnight caverns he could see
Slowly the hidden mystery
As clearly as by day.

IX.

Together the smooth plain they trod,
Their hopes were fresh, their days were young;
Of Day and Night, of Man and God
One spoke, the other cheer'd the road
With many-voiced song.

X.

But when they saw those lofty lights,
The Poet said unto the Sage,
'Thro' evil days, and stormy nights
Our way must lie to yonder heights,
From weary youth to age;

XI.

'But fear not Thou—we shall not fail—
And when I reach the topmost stair,
Dear Brother, I will bid thee hail,
And to thine ear the voice shall sail
Thro' the clear mountain air.'

THE BRIDAL.

I.

O THE bells! the morning bells!
Sinking, swelling, soft and clear,
Glad Pæan, hark! it tells
Joy is here;
Thro' light ambrosial dream of earliest morn
The melody came wafted from afar,
Sweet as the harps of Angels earthward borne
On some descending star!

I rose—I lean'd thro' woodbines o'er the lawn—
'Twas early day, right early—and the Dawn
Wax'd like the springtide of a waveless sea
Beyond the dark hills and the umber lea;

And with the breath of the upcoming Day,
Ten thousand spirits of the blissful May
From cowslip slopes, green banks, and heathy fells,
Did come and go like those sweet morning bells.

O welcome, golden Dawn, and Summer clime,
Wild bird and dewy flower, and tuneful chime,
Make drunk my sense, and let me dream that I
Am just newborn in some lost isle of joy,
And that the happy Gods are hither winging
With blossom incense and the sound of singing,
O welcome, Festal Hours; I will away,
I too will haste me, 'tis a Marriage day!

There on the hillside is that home of thine
Curtain'd in jasmin-wreaths, and curly vine;
And thou too wakest, Rosa, and the light
Bathes in thy blue eyes searching for Delight;
Thy Welcome 'tis, thy Jubilee a ringing!
Yet from the fount of Joy a tear is springing,
For oh! the selfsame Love that lights thine eye
Shows thee the beauty of the days gone by.

II.

The Marriage-bells are ringing,
The merry winds go by,
The Summer birds are singing
In the sky!
The bridal bells, ah! merrily, hark! they ring,
Rising and falling like a lover's heart,
Over the hills their silver sounds they fling,
And valleys far apart!

And He too wakes! the glory of the Prime
Shines on his brow, and in his heart sublime;
Thro' charmed light he sees the illumined Spring,
With his own joy he hears the skylark sing;
And the young airs that ripple the treetops
Have got their wings from his enchanted hopes;
The dazzling dews that on the roses lie,
The sunlit streams are kindled at his eye!

With heedless heart he looks across the land,
And far as he can see on either hand

Greenwood and garden, and the wealth that fills
The teeming vales, and robes the Summer hills
Are his; but from his tower he only sees
One mossy roof half hid among the trees;
There is the priceless treasure that outweighs
All hopes and memories, all delights and praise.

And if his heart is plumed with sudden pride—
'Mine is the noble race that lived or died
For Honor; mine the name unstain'd of Ill,
Blown from the lips of Fame, with echoes still;
Mine are the sires whom bards have sung—who held
First place in Council, first in Battlefield;
Yet All is Nought'—he sigh'd—'till thou art mine;
Kings might give crowns for that one heart of thine!'

III.

The Bridal bells are pealing!
We will rejoice to-day!
The blissful sounds are stealing
Hearts away;

The jocund bells are pealing fast and sweet,
Softly they come and go like lovers' sighs;
In one glad thought the young and old are met,
The simple and the wise.

They reach the woodman in the morning air,
They reach the baron in his carven chair,
The dark-eyed damsel bending o'er the spring,
The scholar in dim cloister murmuring;
The dusty pilgrim stays across the stile;
The smith upon his anvil leans awhile;
Boys whistle—beggars bustle—shepherds sing—
The marriage-bells ring merrily; hark, they ring!

The Sun is kissing off from Woodnymphs' eyes
Their evening tears, and dewy breathings rise
From wildflower urns—o'er waving fields of wheat
Swift shadows stream away, and woodnotes fleet
From frolic finches tremble here and there
'Mid the loud carols and the breezy air—
I hear blithe tongues and tread of rustic feet,
The joyous bells are pealing fast and sweet!

Of life, and love, and luck the countryfolk
Discourse by riverside, and hedgerow oak,
Of fairy gifts, and wondrous fortune after,
They tell with faith, with antique songs and laughter;
If one shrewd tongue should jar and seek to shame
The Bride's new honors with her humble name,
'Thou in her place wouldst merit thine own jest,'
They cry—'but she is better than their best!'

IV.

The happy bells are chiming;
Here comes the peerless Bride,
A mighty host is climbing
The hill side;
Through briary bypath and o'er sunny down
They haste unto the bridal, for to-day
The Lord of half the country and the town
Shall lead his bride away.

Who is the Bride? a simple village maid—
Beauty and Truth—a violet in the shade,

But she shall show proud Sin and painted Scorn
That Truth and Beauty are to Honor born;
He teach proud hearts to feel, proud eyes to see
How strong is Nature, winged Love how free:
Long be their days, their fortunes glad and sure—
His blood is noble and her heart is pure!

Look on her—in that aspect ye may spy
Her mirror'd soul where all sweet pictures lie;
Spring, Summer, with their changes o'er it flit,
And Morn and Eve, twin sisters, look from it;
While memories of green woods and tuneful streams,
Lone songs, and Autumn sighs, and April gleams
In shadows of soft melancholy flow
Up from her heart across her crowned brow.

The little maidens gaze into her face,
And store sweet records for the afterdays;
And iron men feel tender moments twine
Their hearts of oak, like tendrils of the vine;
And the faint lightning of an infant mirth
Plays round pale lips—the last they feel on earth—

Of aged women leaning on their staves,
Like early roses dropt in open graves.

V.

Hark! the loud-voiced bells
Stream on the world around
With the full wind, as it swells,
Seas of sound!
It is a Voice that calls to onward years—
'Turn back, and when Delight is fled away,
Look thro' the evening mists of mortal tears
On this immortal Day.'

That Memory, like the deep light in the West,
Shall bathe your hearts, before ye sink to rest,
Not only with the glow of good things gone,
But with the faith, that, when your days be done,
Another Morn shall rise, but not to set,
And ye shall meet once more, as once ye met,
Your Beauty wrought to Glory by the Giver,
The Joy within ye perfected for ever!

Oh! what rare thoughts are his, oh! what delight
To gaze upon her, hold her in his sight,
To quaff her smiles, as thirsty bees that sup,
Nuzzled within a noonday lily's cup,
The last sweets, lest a drop be there in vain;
And in that rapture all remember'd pain
Exhales, and for a moment he can see
A lightning flash of what the Soul shall be!

But She—dear heart—her thoughts are fled once more
To far-off morns, and summer nights of yore,
Mayings, and nuttings, and the old folks' tale,
Hayfield and harvest, and the dance i' the dale;
Home words she loved—quaint hopes whereon she fed,
The songs she sung—the faithful words she read—
Till she has need to look up to his eyes
For all their warmth to sun her timeless sighs.

VI.

Softly the sweet bells fail;
I hear a linnet sing
Among the blossoms pale
Of the Spring:

Alone he sings upon a whitethorn spray
And fills the gusty wind—I see between
The odorous branches of the bending May
The bridal pass the green.

What is more full of hope than infants' dreams?'
He sang, 'more blest than a green valley seems
Mid herbless rocks? more pure than mountain streams?
Chaster than light? warmer than imaged beams?
More full of promise than the vernal heaven?
More peaceful than a starry summer's even?
More sweet than mossrose odours after rain
With violets mix'd? or a two-voiced strain?

'What is more welcome than the dawn of day
To lone men lost in darkness and dismay?
To aged eyes than is the hue of wine?
To weary wanderers than the sound and shine
Of sudden waters in a desert place?
To a sad brother than a sister's face?'
Oh! Love, first Love, so full of hope and truth;
A guileless Maiden and a gentle Youth.

Thro' arches of wreathed rose they take their way,
He the fresh Morning, She the better May,
'Twixt jocund hearts and voices jubilant
And unseen Gods that guard on either hand,
And blissful tears, and tender smiles that fall
On her dear head—great Summer over all!
While Envy, of the triumph half afraid,
Slinks, like a dazzled serpent, to the shade.

VII.

Softly the loud peal dies,
In passing winds it drowns,
But breathes, like perfect joys,
Tender tones;
But clearer comes the wildbird's eager call,
While the robed pomp is streaming out of sight,
But a full sunburst showers the festival,
And crowns farewell with light.

'Farewell! and while the Summers wax and wane,
In children's children may ye live again;

Oh! may your beauty from its ashes rise,
Your strength be theirs, your virtues light their eyes!
Your Charity—green Vine that clasps the stem
Of wither'd Sorrow—bloom and spread in them;
And while soft mosses clothe the forest tree,
May Might wed Mercy; Pride, Humility.

'Farewell! and like the echoes of these chimes
May your pure concord stir the aftertimes;
Your story be a signal lamp to guide
The Generations from the waste of Pride;
Like the sunbeam that flows before your path,
Your faith right onward scatter clouds of wrath;
And live, O live, in songs that shall be sung,
The first true hearts that made the Old World young!'

Farewell! and other tongues took up the sound
As tho' the long-lost Golden Age were found:
That shout of joy went up among the hills
And reach'd a holy Hermit bow'd with ills;
And he breathed up a solitary prayer
From his pale lips into the sunny air—

'Oh! that on those young hearts, this day, might rest,
Father, thy blessing'—and they shall be blest!

VIII.

The Winds have hush'd their wings,
The merry bells are still,
No more the linnet sings
On the hill;
But tender maidens linger with soft eyes
Under the dim gleam of a throbbing star,
Then close their lattices with low sweet sighs,
Light as the dewless air.

With glittering locks, like Summer, he descends
'Mid courteous aspects—flatterers, feers, and friends;
Brothers and Uncles on his footsteps wait,
Aunts, Sisters, Cousins, that must bow to Fate;
She takes their forced welcome, and their wiles
For her own Truth, and lifts her head, and smiles;
They shall not change that Truth by any art,
Oh! may her love change them b[illegible] they part.

The minstrels wait them at the palacegate,
She hears the flood, and sees the flash of State;
For all the mirth, the tumult, and the song,
Her fond thoughts follow the departing throng;
She turns away, her eyes are dim with tears,
Her mother's blessing lingers in her ears,
'Bless thee, my Child!'—the music is unheard,
Her heart grows strong on that remember'd word.

Again in dreams I heard the Marriage bells
Waving from far sweet welcomes and farewells;
And Alleluias from the Deep I heard,
And songs of star-brow'd Seraphim insphered,
That ebb'd unto that Sea without a shore,
Leaving vast awe and silence to adore;
But still, methinks, I hear the dying strain—
The crooked straight, and the rough places plain!'

A BIRD OF DAWN.

I.

ERE yet the lamp of Day
Flamed in the East, my lattice I unbarr'd,
And saw the purple zenith still bestarr'd,
The earth asleep; rare odors wing'd their way
From the dew-laden blossoms of the May,
And flowers that lay in dream along the sloping sward.

II.

I heard the rivulets chime:
In deepest darkness were the forests drown'd:
Not yet the everlasting peaks were crown'd
With the first fires: against the orient clime
The mountains huge stood like the walls of Time,
That 'twixt the doleful World and happy Islands frown'd.

III.

Just then, 'tween Day and Night,
I heard a wild bird singing in the dawn:
Far over hill, and stream, and wood, and lawn
That solitary magic took its flight,
That holy, tender utterance of delight,
By loving Echoes deep into the forests drawn.

IV.

'Ye mourners, wake, and hark!'
I cried—'tis Love a pleading for the Earth—
To-day a Conqueror shall have his birth;
Ye melancholy dreamers, rise and mark,
The ancient things are ceasing with the dark,
And Death on cloudy wings is gone for ever forth!'

V.

Around, above, below,
Was nought but I, and that enchantment strong—
But lo! a God, a God is borne along!
And golden smoke, and fiery rivers flow
Down on the earth—great winds begin to blow;
A God hath storm'd the World to listen to that song!

A DREAM OF SPRING.

I.

FAIRER than daughters of Mortality,
Who cam'st in dream, and with a dream didst fly,
I pray thee come before the day I die,
Come once again to me;

II.

Come to me, O my Angel, as before—
Come with thy golden smile illumining
My sleep—come thou some twilight of the Spring
Once more, blest Soul, once more!

III.

Come with thy dark and odorous locks unbraided,
Come with that sweet and dusky brow of thine,
Come with that low-toned melody divine,
And deep eyes softly shaded.

IV.

I do remember well, it was that time
Of early youth, when Beauty fell on me
Like the warm breathing on a waveless sea
Of the sweet vernal prime;

V.

It was the season when the days of Spring
Were dying into Summer, and at Even
I looked forth sadly on the glooming Heaven,
And heard the lone bird sing;

VI.

My thoughts were sad with musing of sad years
Sung sweetly by a minstrel long departed,
And with the sighs of him so gentle-hearted
I mingled mine own tears;

VII.

Strange were those tears—for I was glad and young—
But he of Arqua made such long lament
That pale Despair into my spirit went
With echoes of his song;

VIII.

My heart began to throb within my breast
As though it strove against the grasp of Death,
I panted, and I drew the troubled breath
Of dreamers in unrest;

IX.

And as the shadows of the Night unfurl'd
Their wings, I saw fair shapes in woful plight
Sign long farèwells, and take their hopeless flight
For ever from the World;

X.

And as the wild notes of the wakeful bird
Paused in the gloom, methought I heard a sigh
Pass, like an Earth-lament, in music by,
The saddest ever heard;

XI.

'Spirits of the disconsolate, do ye
Watch round the ways of men,' I cried, 'unseen,
Only to weep, that sorrows which have been,
Are, and shall ever be?

XII.

'That fondest hearts are stabb'd with deepest pain—
That Pity battles against pitiless Ill,
That lonely Love laments and struggles still,
And seeks for Love in vain?'

XIII.

I do remember well, it was the time
When in the East pale rose begins to burn,
And night-dews brim the lily's silver urn,
And fresher breathes the clime;

XIV.

When the lone nightingale, that sang all night,
Drowses, and blossoms of the orange bower
Pant in the still air, and the passionflower
Unfolds her in the light;

XV.

I laid my brow upon that book of sighs;
Slowly I sank into a charmed sleep
While yet the tears his sorrows made me weep
Were trembling in mine eyes.

XVI.

Sudden a glory fill'd the silence wide;
A light more beautiful than Summernoon,
Warm as the Sun, yet tender as the Moon,
And drown'd me in its tide!

XVII.

It pour'd into the void; it swathed the bowers;
It bathed the earth like bliss from Paradise;
It came with melody impregn'd, and sighs
Of young unfolding flowers.

XVIII.

From underneath hush'd walks of dewy vine,
And coverts of soft roses, thou didst rise
Into my chamber open to the skies,
With that winged heart of thine;

XIX.

And from thine eyes didst thro' mine eyelids pour
Soft lightnings, that within me tremble yet,
Fringing sad clouds with their reflection sweet,
Since that immortal hour;

XX.

I look'd upon thy face—and lo! thereon
The Shape of mine own Soul—whate'er of me
Slept folded up in Personality
Was there transfused, and shone;

XXI.

Melodies, that with inarticulate tone
Wander'd within me, wondering whence they sprung,
Heard music in the magic of thy tongue,
Strange echo of their own;

XXII.

Raptures, that in a moment live and die—
Shades from the Past—prophetic voices low—
Glories, that like still lightnings come and go—
Love, Anguish, Ecstacy;

XXIII.

Dim thoughts, that reach us from the Infinite,
Faint as far seas, or twilight in eclipse,
Flow'd forth like noonday waters from thy lips,
And from thy brows like light!

XXIV.

I heard thee speak—swift utterance, clear and low—
Thou leanedst over me, and in mine ear
Breathedst such tender notes, that still I hear—
Oh! could I see thee now!

XXV.

Didst thou not say? methought I heard thee say,
'Beloved (words, ah! desolate and sweet),
Alas! in thy sad World we cannot meet,
Or in the light of Day;

XXVI.

But, O beloved, I will hold for thee
A happy Isle, beyond the Worlds forlorn,
Beyond the golden rivers of the Morn,
Deep in the starry sea.

XXVII.

I am the Spirit that hath onward led
Thy mortal steps, the Being that shall be
Hereafter loved by thee, and only thee,
The Soul thy Soul shall wed;

XXVIII.

Before the bases of the World were laid,
Or bloodless dust awoke unto the Sun,
The secret Spirit of the Highest One
Knew all things he hath made;

XXIX.

The thoughts of God were harmonies to be—
Music and Light—the Waters and the Winds—
And Souls ordained their perfect life to find
In perfect sympathy;

XXX.

And though all Nature mourn as One bereaved,
And mystic shadows cross the mystic plan,
Doubt not, the Life of Things, and Soul of Man
Shall end, as preconceived;

XXXI.

As distant Stars draw influence from each other,
Soul, counterpart of Soul, though far apart,
Still trembles to its fellow, more than heart
Of brother unto brother;

XXXII.

This night thou sawest one in the zenith shine:
Its light had travelled for a thousand years;
So doth my soul, drawn by thy sighs and tears,
Flow ever unto thine;

XXXIII.

The Star thou sawest hath been extinguished
A thousand years; yet still behold it burn:
So shall thy thoughts, which ever to me turn,
Live after thou art dead;

XXXIV.

For thou must die, and change: thou must be cast
Upon the torrent of the ebbless flood,
Change is the Life of Life, the pulse of God,
The soul of the dead Past;

XXXV.

Thou hast seen Seas shrunk from their ancient bed;
Thou hast seen Wastes where Forests stood of old;
Thou hast seen Mountains from their places roll'd;
Great Suns are vanished;

XXXVI.

Still Change drives onward mighty things and small,
The Nations of the Past are silent now,
And yet a few more vexed years, and thou
Shalt cease to be at all;

XXXVII.

The solemn Voices that arose, and cried
New tidings, and o'erwhelmed the earth with wonder,
Faint, as on leeward winds the dying thunder,
Or like a sinking tide;

XXXVIII.

Not all thy love for me, fond heart, nor mine
For thee, not all the rapture in thy spirit
Will stay the doom thou mortal must inherit—
Thy soul must flee to mine.

XXXIX.

Behold, I see beyond the mystic River
Of Time, I see the silent Earth afar
Hang sunless in the icy void—the star
Of Day is quenched for ever!

XL.

Weep not, nor be disquieted in vain;
Behold the noise of human deeds hath ceased,
And the Eternal Spirit hath released
Thy life from Fear and Pain;

XLI.

And I am sitting with thee in the light
Of the unquenched Lamps before the Throne,
That burn'd ere Time was born, ere Sunlight shone,
Or the Star-zoned Night.

XLII.

And there is music roundabout us flowing,
Whose ever-changing harmonies keep time
To great imaginings that onward climb,
And thoughts for ever growing;

XLIII.

Behold the spirit of thy Mind is new,
The very fashion of thy Form is wrought
In beauty such as thine imperfect thought
Might never image true;

XLIV.

And thou art gazing with a glorious brow,
A tearless conscience, and a cloudless eye
Upon the Past, and then beholdest why
Thou art in darkness now;

XLV.

Darkness—yet cloven with light from far away—
Like that which glimmers o'er the sunless Earth,
And whispers to it whence it hath its birth—
From the great coming Day!

XLVI.

All mortal Passions in thy mighty Mind
Are dead—but Hope hath got her other wings
To soar beyond all vain imaginings,
And leave the stars behind,

XLVII.

Far as the Seas surpass a drop of rain,
Far as the boundless Winds thy little breath,
Far as unbounded Life thy World of Death,
Or Gods the strength of Men!'

XLVIII.

That music ceased; I felt my forehead thrill
With touches of those lips; the immortal fire
Seem'd all my frame that moment to inspire
With life that lingers still!

XLIX.

Slowly her beauty faded from my view,
Ev'n as a silver star that bathes its light
In the slow-gathering dews and breath of night,
As back to Heaven she flew;

L.

'Spirit,' I cried, when I beheld that sight,
With struggling sobs, like voice of drowning men,
Or one that meets the wind—'oh! turn again,
And answer me aright,

LI.

'How long, how long shall I lament for thee,
Upon the torrent of Destruction cast
Into the cold, illimitable Vast,
O Blest Affinity?'

LII.

Another Voice, it still'd the heart to hear,
Far off, as from behind the walls of Time,
Spake, and in echoes tender and sublime
Waved to the utmost sphere;

LIII.

'Love cannot die—empyreal and divine—
As viewless atoms into systems grow,
As the fire-winged worlds together flow,
Her soul shall flow to thine!'

LIV.

But with the anguish of that agony
I woke—my tears fell in the silent hour—
'Ah! sure,' I cried, 'if Love be Life, be Power,
My soul shall follow Thee!'

LV.

Just then above great walls of towered cloud
The glorious Dawn like a world-whelming tide
Roll'd earthward; even then I would have died,
Drown'd in that golden flood,

LVI.

So that I might have follow'd where she went
For ever diving thro' the endless light,
And sumless years, to drink another sight
Of such wild ravishment!

LVII.

With thoughts of that sweet dream the livelong day
My spirit stirr'd—as odours of a flower
Will haunt the sense in many an afterhour,
When it is shed away;

LVIII.

Oft as the memory of the vision came
My pulses trembled, and the Summer green
Quiver'd before my sight, as it were seen
Thro' streams of fiery flame!

LIX.

Angel of beauty, thou that once erewhile
Didst visit me in dreams, and with thine eyes
Turnedst my darkness into Paradise,
And with thy blessed smile;

LX.

Fairer than daughters of Mortality,
Who cam'st in dream, and with a dream didst fly,
I pray thee, come to me the day I die,
And take me back with thee!

SONGS OF AN OLD MAN.

I.

Some Spirit to me brings
The Past by night; once more I see unfold
The gates of Silence and of Death—behold
The lost, the loved—I hear familiar tongues,
Laughter, and merrymaking, and old songs;
From forth a woodbine bower
A sweet face, like a flower,
Looks to me with soft eyes, and to me sings—
I wake, and all that World back into darkness springs!

I weep to think of them,
Darkness and Silence shake me like the frown
Of overshadowing Death—the Dream looks down
Like a lost Angel from the isles that lie
Far in the Ocean of Eternity,
The Earth is pale and cold,
Nature is faint and old,
And all the voices of the living seem
Like sighs of moon-lit Ghosts beside that sunny dream.

Some Spirit to me sends
The Past by night: sometimes a festival,
Sometimes a bridal, and sometimes a call
Of happy hunters wakes me from my sleep;
I stretch my arms in darkness, and I weep;
But, Morn, that face of thine,
Eternal and divine,
That, only that, O Morn, can make amends
To me for cares and ills, flown youth, and parted friends.

Thou healest all that pain :
No sooner do I hear the streaming trees,
The wildbirds sparkling in the gusts, the bees'
Low monody—no sooner do I breathe
The rathe rich odours from the slopes beneath,
Than spectres of the heart,
Like shadows, pass and part,
O'er the waste shores thy tide rolls back amain,
The hollows fill once more, and I am born again!

II.

WHEN pale phantasmal Fear
Racks me, and weeping Memories near me hover,
Of Youth, and her lovesongs for ever over;
When thro' the silence the wan ghosts go by
Of Hope and Beauty, Love and Phantasy;
When dreams of coming woe
Make gladder Long ago;
Daughters of Morn, come to me, give me cheer,
Rosefooted Nymphs, kind Sylphs, sweet Oreads, come anear.

Lay on my brows sweet brere,
Lay with your delicate hands some lilybells
Pluckt ere the flush of dawn, and thro' twined shells
Murmur of thymy slope, and mountainfold,
Whisper of viny hills, and sands of gold
Kiss'd by some azure bay
In Edens far away,
Spirits of Summer, softly come anear,
And sing, oh! sing of the wild islands in mine ear.

Tell me where woodbines are,
Where the wildvine, and the pale roses blow,
Where I may stand, and see afar below
Meadow, and water'd vale, and rivershore,
And dales with coming harvest burnish'd o'er,
Where with dew-pearled wings
The mavis sits and sings,
Where the cold spring from under dome of spar
Leaps out of darkness forth, swift as a rushing star.

That I with pure delight
May quench my thirst, drink deep, and reinfuse
Youth in my heart with those perennial dews,
And water my dead fancies till they grow,
And breathe in that rare bliss they only know
Who meet the virgin Hours
'Mid pearly moss and flowers,
And hear the worldwide Pæan rise, as Light
Wakes like a warrior arm'd, a king unthrones the Night.

With ye I would be borne
To the high forests and the reboant hills,
Where o'er torn crags the thundering torrent spills,
Where, 'mid the doubling echoes and the sounds
Of cataracts I may hark the cry of hounds,
And catch with dazzled eye
Great Dian sweeping by,
To clear fanfaras of a silver horn,
While I lie hid behind the wildbells, heath, or corn.

Or let me hear from under
The sound of fresh seas, like an anthem singing
By the wide World, go up while Day is springing,
And wake right early; let me turn my sight
On the plumed surges, towering in the light,
And mark them run and leap
O'er rocky isle and steep,
Or cloven to dazzling dust, or blown asunder,
Or answer'd from the hills with rolls of cavern'd thunder.

Let in the breezy May;
Cast back the lattice, let me quaff the Dawn,
Let the wild wind, dew-laden from the lawn,
Scatter my fever'd heart with dewy showers,
Snatch from my brows the poppy's drowsy flowers,
With ye I'll fly, with ye,
To the woods, the hills, the sea;
Cast back the lattice, show me far away
The azure mountain-tops, and torrent springs of Day!

THIRTY-FIRST OF MAY.

I.

AWAKE!—the crimson dawn is glowing,
And blissful breath of Morn
From golden seas is earthward flowing
Thro' mountain-peaks forlorn;
'Twixt the tall roses, and the jasmins near,
That darkly hover in the twilight air,
I see the glory streaming, and I hear
The sweet wind whispering like a messenger.

II.

'Tis time to sing!—the Spirits of Spring
Go softly by mine ear,
And out of Fairyland they bring
Glad tidings to me here;
'Tis time to sing! now is the pride of Youth
Pluming the woods, and the first rose appears,
And Summer from the chambers of the South
Is coming up to wipe away all tears!

III.

They bring glad tidings from afar
Of Her that cometh after
To fill the earth, to light the air,
With music and with laughter;
Ev'n now she leaneth forward, as she stands,
And her fire-winged horses, shod with gold,
Stream, like a sunrise, from before her hands,
And thro' the Eastern gates her wheels are roll'd!

IV.

'Tis time to sing—the woodlands ring
New carols day by day;
The wild birds of the islands sing
Whence they have flown away;
'Tis time to sing—the nightingale is come—
And 'mid the laurels chants he all night long,
And bids the leaves be still—the winds be dumb—
And like the starlight flashes forth his song!

V.

Immortal Beauty from above,
Like sunlight breathed on cloud,
Touches the weary soul with love,
And hath unwound the shroud
Of buried Nature till she looks again
Fresh in infantine smiles and childish tears,
And o'er the rugged hearts of aged men
Sheds the pure dew of Youth's delicious years.

VI.

The heart of the awaken'd Earth
Breathes odorous ecstacy;
Let ours beat time unto her mirth,
And hymn her jubilee!
The glory of the Universal Soul
Ascends from mountain-tops, and lowly flowers,
The mighty pulses throbbing through the Whole
Call unto us for answering life in ours!

VII.

Arise! young Queen of forests green,
A path was strown for thee
With hyacinth, and gold bells atween,
And red anemone;
Arise! young Queen of beauty and delight,
Lift up in this fair land thine happy eyes,
The valleys yearn, and gardens for thy sight,
But chief this heart that prays for thee with sighs.

VIII.

How oft into the opening blue
I look'd up wistfully,
In hope to see thee wafted thro'
Bright rifts of stormy sky;
Many gray morns, sad nights, and weary days,
Without thy golden smile my heart was dying,
Oh! in the valleys let me see thy face,
And thy loose locks adown the woodwalks flying.

IX.

Come, with thy flowers, and silver showers,
Thy rainbows, and thy light;
Fold in thy robe the naked Hours,
And fill them with thy might;
Though less I seek thee for the loveliness
Thou laughest from thee over land and sea,
Than for the hues wherein gay Fancies dress
My drooping spirit at the sight of thee.

X.

Come, with thy voice of thousand joys,
Thy leaves, and fluttering wings;
Come with thy breezes, and the noise
Of rivulets and of springs;
Though less I seek thee for thine harmonies
Of winds and waters, and thy songs divine,
Than for that Angel that within me lies,
And makes glad music echoing unto thine.

XI.

O Gardens blossoming anew!
O Rivers, and fresh Rills!
O Mountains in your mantles blue!
O dales of daffodils!
What ye can do no mortal spirit can,
Ye have a strength within we cannot borrow,
Blessed are ye beyond the heart of Man,
Your Joy, your Love, your Life beyond all Sorrow!

THE SOLDIER.

I.

THE morn is bright—the clouds ride swift and high,
The wild breeze curls the woods, the wild birds sing,
In answer to a lark that floods the sky
With fiery notes that make the sunlight ring;
The world is full of life and power,
Each moment sweeter than the last,
Swift Youth flies onward to the unborn hour,
And Age unto the Past.

II.

A time-worn Chieftain in his garden sate,
And saw a great host arm'd for battle go
With banners and with plumes before his gate,
He heard the music, like a tempest, blow;
He saw the banners float and swell,
The iron lightnings swift and dread,
And his old eyes grew glad and terrible,
And sparkled in his head.

III.

Oh! who can think on darkness and on Death,
The silence, and the coldness of the grave,
The nameless anguish of life's ebbing breath,
When the loud trumpet flattereth the brave?
While Faith is strong, and Fancy young,
And Glory lifts the heart, like wine,
O God, the knell of nations may be rung
In notes that are divine!

IV.

And One, his tall helm flashing like a star,
With crimson mantle waving o'er his steel,
Descended swift, and with a voice of war
Trod down the roses 'neath his armed heel;
And pointing with his mailed hand
To that proud Chivalry and bold,
He cried 'Wilt thou too linger in the land,
Who wert our Chief of old?'

V.

The trumpet blew again—but his great voice
Took up the sound, and he arose in haste,
'I come,' he cried, 'I make the better choice,
To do, or die—but not to be surpast;
Shall younger men go by, and say,
'He was a man, his deeds are done?'
I come—my fame that was the rising day,
Shall be the setting sun!

VI.

'Bring me mine ancient arms, my father's sword,
My steed—he snuffs the tumult from afar,
And beats with angry hoof, for he hath heard
The trumpet sound, and seen the cloud of war;
Farewell, my home, and farewell, thou,
Dearest, save Honor; I will earn
Yet one more laurel for this bruised brow
While yet my pulses burn.

VII.

'Ply thou thy distaff, gentle-hearted wife,
Teach truth, and mercy, sing beneath the vine;
The dust of battle is my breath of life,
Oblivion sweeter than to live and pine;
To drink in haste the cup of fears,
To feel, to-day we win or die;
To ride away with music in mine ears,
And back with Victory!

VIII.

Can hearts be still, that ever have been stirr'd
By deeds of Glory—can the arm repose
Within the breast, that once hath flash'd the sword,
The eye grow blind that lighten'd on our foes?
What music is so sweet to hear
As region shouts when Cities craze,
And thro' the stormed gates pale Kings appear
In sorrow and amaze?

IX.

'What pity half so sweet as that, so rare—
When high-born Beauty leading in her hands
Young heirs of empire, desolate and fair,
And lowly weeping at my stirrup stands;
While with despairing art she flings
Soft lightnings into her blue eyes
That, yesterday, perchance had frown'd on Kings,
And breathes forlornest sighs?'

X.

'Those words of triumph fell like sparks of fire,
And lighted in the heart of his young heir,
Mix'd with fond thoughts the spirit of his sire;
Few summers yet had kiss'd his sunny hair:
And he rose up, and then he bow'd
His knee—he said, 'My years are few,
But oh! my heart is strong, my hopes as proud
As thine, when they were new!

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XI.

'Thy laurell'd Age my Youth shall never shame;
If Age be dauntless, why should Youth not dare?
Else will men mock in me thine honor'd name,
That is and is not, like a clouded star:
And oh! if moments there should be,
When thou art faint, and none are near
To fence some winged Death athirst for thee,
And shield thee, father dear.'

XII.

Again the trumpet sounded, and he rose
Strong as in youth, and from his eye there went
Arrows of fire, that would confound his foes,
And made his lordly head magnificent!
But ere he pass'd the porch, a hand
Upon his own, like Pity, laid,
Into its scabbard press'd the half-drawn brand,
A voice, like music, said:

XIII.

'Oh! fly not thus—remember all thy days
By thine own hearth, beneath that ancient tree,
Thy children, and their mirth, and loving ways,
Forget not all thy vows, forget not me!
Oh! I will sing thee other songs
Shall stir thee like the morning air,
Sweeter than all the voices wrung from wrongs,
Pæans, and shouts of war!

XIV.

'While hunters bold ride homeward with the spoil;
While bugles ring, and forest echoes cry;
While mowers laugh, while reapers sing and toil;
While vintage bands go, like a revel, by;
While bridals pass, while poor men bless,
While Yule is blithe, while Summer fair,
Oh! wouldst thou change the flowing songs of peace
For triumphs, and despair?

XV.

'Alas! alas! Ambition, why art thou
Yclad in Hope's gay dress of many dyes,
With flowing garlands on thy faithless brow,
Joy on thy tongue, and laughter in thine eyes?
If thy fondest worshipper
Dared but whisper of his woes,
Both king and clown would hate thy name and fear,
And wreak it on their foes!'

XVI.

Again the dreadful trumpet rang forlorn,
Again she sang, 'I saw a sight sublime,
The World's new Conqueror pass the gates of Morn,
And to the crazy battlements of Time
He led bright hosts of his compeers,
Matchless in beauty, great in limb,
Strong Spirits of indomitable Years,
With faces turn'd on Him!

XVII.

'And with a shout that clave the clouds asunder,
And round the illumined, vast horizon ran
In endless echoes of melodious thunder,
Down to the World their godlike march began;
The armies of the Days of old
Smit thro' with splendors of that sight
Back on each hand in stormy ruin roll'd,
And perish'd in the light!

XVIII.

'And One, from whose great presence glory came
As from a sunrise, in a still small voice
That made the ether flutter like a flame,
Utter'd sweet words that made the earth rejoice!
All the World broke forth in songs;
'God, our God is come again,
Build up the fallen cities, heal the wrongs,
For He shall dwell with men!'

XIX.

'Oh! think, that every home beneath the skies
Hath hearths, and altars, holy as thine own,
That from the cinders of Destruction rise
Earth-kindling sparks, when Justice is o'erthrown;
Think, Oh! think of me and mine,
When widows weep, and babes lament,
And sanguine Ruin makes the midnight shine;
Think timely, and relent!'

XX.

Once more that note, like evil Angel's, shrill;
He frown'd, and moved disdainful, but she held
Unto his mantle, and his iron will
Bent to her breath, although his pride rebell'd:
'And canst thou arm the bloody hand
Against the Stranger, and not fear
The woes thou wreakest on another's land
May recompense thee here?

XXI.

'Whate'er the fever of thy heart may be,
One hope burns deeper than thy thirst of fame,
The hope, that sometime, sometime thou shalt see
Thy rooftree o'er thee, and thy hearth the same;
Sometime thou shalt see me, hear me,
As in the tender ancient days,
Chanting old ditties with my children near me,
And teaching them thy praise.

XXII.

'When some pale mother with astonished eyes,
Whence hate, not love, hath exiled hope and fear,
Hath stood before thee, mad with agonies,
And caught thee by the hand, and bade thee hear,
Bade thee in her frenzied pride
Give back her sons, and their slain sire,
Hast thou ne'er dream'd such chance might here betide
And shudder'd in thine ire?'

XXIII.

Far down the wind the trumpet spake again,
Sad, as a plaint, and in his eye a tear
Hung, as he strove against himself in vain;
'Ah!' then she cried, 'and shouldst thou enter here,
And see thro' thresholds black with fire
Thy chambers thick with armed men,
No faithful lips to wêlcome spouse, or sire,
Would Glory serve thee then?

XXIV.

'Is it not better to hang up thy shield
And sheath thy sword, while loving hands unlace
Thy batter'd helm, than on the stormy field
To gaze upon thy brother's dying face?
To clasp thy children, and to feel
Their faithful voices thrill thine ear,
Than dust, and thunder, and the clash of steel,
The glory and the fear?

XXV.

'To mark the wind, the sunshine, and the shower
Clothe the old battle-fields with harvest ears;
To watch thy crops increase, thy garden flower,
In this green vale which early love endears;
To see the tree of Knowledge stand
Fed by Love's light, but not his tears,
And the wise nations flock beneath the hand
Of Him who rolls the years?'

XXVI.

Far off the warnote died upon the breeze,
Like Sorrow drowning in the waves of Time,
The leaves, like friendly tongues, discoursed of peace,
He heard a blackbird pipe, a rivulet chime;
As music over madness streams,
Those sweet notes melted him to sighs,
Awoke his heart from its tumultuous dreams,
And clouded o'er his eyes.

XXVII.

But where was He, the plumed Tempter, fled?
Far down the vale they saw his morion dance
Above the dust that curl'd around his head,
And caught the last proud glitter of his lance;
And when the blackbird ceased his singing,
And the wind blew freshly by,
They heard his hoofs amid the mountains ringing,
They heard his battle-cry.

XXVIII.

A blue-eyed daughter led him to his seat
Beneath the garden trees, laid by his sword,
Unclasp'd his glittering helm, and at his feet
Lay—as he murmur'd fondly, not unheard,
While his little ones embraced
His neck, and clomb about his knees,
'Forgive me, God, if I forgot the Past,
And teach my spirit Peace!'

THE SKYLARK.

I.

How the blithe Lark runs up the golden stair
That leans thro' cloudy gates from Heaven to Earth,
And all alone in the empyreal air
Fills it with jubilant sweet songs of mirth;
How far he seems, how far
With the light upon his wings,
Is it a bird, or star
That shines, and sings?

II.

What matter if the days be dark and frore,
That sunbeam tells of other days to be,
And singing in the light that floods him o'er
In joy he overtakes Futurity;
Under cloud-arches vast
He peeps, and sees behind
Great Summer coming fast
Adown the wind!

III.

And now he dives into a rainbow's rivers,
In streams of gold and purple he is drown'd,
Shrilly the arrows of his song he shivers,
As tho' the stormy drops were turn'd to sound;
And now he issues thro',
He scales a cloudy tower,
Faintly, like falling dew,
His fast notes shower.

IV.

Let every wind be hush'd, that I may hear
The wondrous things he tells the World below,
Things that we dream of he is watching near,
Hopes that we never dream'd he would bestow;
Alas! the storm hath roll'd
Back the gold gates again,
Or surely he had told
All Heaven to men!

V.

So the victorious Poet sings alone,
And fills with light his solitary home,
And thro' that glory sees new worlds foreshown,
And hears high songs, and triumphs yet to come;
He waves the air of Time
With thrills of golden chords,
And makes the world to climb
On linked words.

VI.

What if his hair be gray, his eyes be dim,
If wealth forsake him, and if friends be cold,
Wonder unbars her thousand gates to him,
Truth never fails, nor Beauty waxeth old;
More than he tells his eyes
Behold, his spirit hears,
Of grief, and joy, and sighs
'Twixt joy and tears.

VII.

Blest is the man who with the sound of song
Can charm away the heartache, and forget
The frost of Penury, and the stings of Wrong,
And drown the fatal whisper of Regret!
Darker are the abodes
Of Kings, tho' his be poor,
While Fancies, like the Gods,
Pass thro' his door.

VIII.

Singing thou scalest Heaven upon thy wings,
Thou liftest a glad heart into the skies;
He maketh his own sunrise, while he sings,
And turns the dusty Earth to Paradise;
I see thee sail along
Far up the sunny streams,
Unseen, I hear his song,
I see his dreams.

TWENTY-FIRST OF JUNE.

I.

To-day beneath the shade of upland bowers
Summer dark-eyed, and clad in youth divine
Lies at the feet of the enamour'd Hours,
That sing him gleesome madrigals, and twine
Wreaths of the red rose and the eglantine.

II.

King of the World! and now and then he quaffs
Out of a goblet bright with nectars drawn
From all sweet bells wherewith the garden laughs,
Green river-bank, and mountain-path, and lawn,
Changed from the pure dew by the blush of dawn.

III.

Below he hears a pleasant sound of singing
From curtain'd valley, and deep woody glade,
And shelter'd walks with silver laughters ringing
Of lovers under trellised roses laid,
And timbrels smitten in the noonday shade.

IV.

The unshod village lad, and country maiden
Thread the green light which thro' the vineyard shines,
With large-leaved paniers of the firstfruits laden,
And mock each other underneath the vines,
And dance, and shout, and run along the lines.

V.

Hard by those walks the lonely pilgrim Sorrow
Wander'd, and thro' the leaves and blossoms peeping
'Ev'n for this gaudy day I will not borrow
A festal robe to be with thine in keeping,'
She hoarsely cried, half laughing, and half weeping;

VI.

'My rags, and staff, and hooded cloak,' she said,
'Ev'n for the honour of this sunny noon
I will not change; thy crimson robe instead,
Like all good things, will fall to me full soon,
Ha! ha! although it be the month of June!'

VII.

She struck the leaves and blossoms with her crutch
Despitefully, and shriek'd a strain of woe;
The tender blossoms felt the evil touch,
And shed themselves away in drifts of snow,
The leaves were wither'd by the fatal blow;

VIII.

Those matin revellers with their youthful Chief
Rose up, and fled; big tears came glittering down
And dash'd the dust away from flower and leaf,
And a swift thunder-shadow with its frown
Lick'd up red robe, bright zone, and rosy crown.

IX.

But as they fled, the sun came forth, and spurn'd
From off the trembling sprays the fallen rain;
They stood beneath a rainbow's arch, and turn'd
Their lovely, laughing aspects back again;
And lo! the beldam stood where they had lain!

X.

Her crazy hand was stretch'd to gather up
The scatter'd wealth that roundabout her lay;
Mantle, and girdle bright, and crown, and cup
She would have thrust into her wallet gray;
They storm'd her with fresh flowers from sight of day!

XI.

Hence! haggard Ghost, they sang, as they once more
Took their green seats beneath the shade, and found
Many a sweet blossom there, unseen before;
Hence! haggard Ghost; and let her voice be drown'd
With laugh, and dance, and song, and timbrel-sound!

MIDSUMMER MORN.

I.

Low in the East the great Midsummer Dawn
  Roll'd up the floodtide of the Ocean Light,
  Far off the peaks and mountain snows were bright,
But Darkness swathed the flowers upon the lawn.

II.

Hush'd was the balmy hour, and blest the clime,
  And softly thro' an open casement crept,
  Where by her deephair'd boy a mother slept,
Breath of the cradled dews and Summertime.

III.

For into that still chamber stoop'd gold blossom,
  Large purple bell, red rose, and woodbine pale;
  And she with dreams of wonder did regale
Her phantasy, while he lay on her bosom.

IV.

She thought the Fairies, creeping from their cells
In those dusk flowers, with loving eyes benign
Stept down, and, as the Day began to shine,
To low sweet music utter'd blissful spells.

V.

Over the slumbers of that infant boy
They hover'd; some from deathless springs of Morn
And from the chambers of the South had borne
Spirits of mirth, love, laughter, hope, and joy.

VI.

Some hunter-like with wreathen horn and plume
In doublet green from greenwood had come forth;
They brought him strength and valour from the North,
And health, and mountain flowers, and spotless bloom.

VII.

And some, like Gnomes from ancient mines of Ind,
Rose bow'd with treasure, and such mighty gems
As flame in front of Eastern diadems,
And gave him golden rods to rule mankind.

VIII.

Some brought him drops from dying heroes' veins
And holy tears; some robes from Fancy's treasure,
Beauty, and vials of the wine of Pleasure,
And soft oblivious balms to lull his pains.

IX.

Some with the last words of the Wise would fill
His tender soul; some with Apollo's songs;
Some with proud echoes of Olympian tongues
Weighty in council, mighty over ill.

X.

Then in the middle of the chamber stood
A sovran Shape, but as a mother mild,
And touch'd the forehead of the sleeping child,
And spoke in solemn accents breathed with good.

XI.

'Fear not—I am the Mother of the Fays:
One gift of mine is better than their best:
Take thou this only—pine not for the rest—
'Tis more than Wealth, or Power, or length of Days.'

XII.

And in her hand an adamant corslet shone—
'Wear this—upon the outer face shall be
The hearts of others shadow'd unto thee,'
She cried—'upon the innermost thine own.'

NOON.

I.

THE winds are hush'd, the clouds have ceased to sail,
And lie like islands in the Ocean-day,
The flowers hang down their heads, and far away
A faint bell tinkles in a sun-drown'd vale:
No voice but the cicala's whirring note—
No motion but the grasshoppers that leap—
The reaper pours into his burning throat
The last drops of his flask, and falls asleep.

II.

The rippling flood of a clear mountain stream
Fleets by, and makes sweet babble with the stones;
The sleepy music with its murmuring tones
Lays me at noontide in Arcadian dream;
Hard by soft night of summer bowers is seen,
With trellised vintage curtaining a cove
Whose diamond mirror paints the amber-green,
The glooming bunches, and the boughs above.

III.

Finches, and moths, and gold-dropt dragon-flies
Dip in their wings, and a young village-daughter
Is bending with her pitcher o'er the water;
Her round arm imaged, and her laughing eyes,
And the fair brow amid the flowing hair,
Look like the Nymph's for Hylas coming up,
Pictured among the leaves, and fruitage there;
Or the boy's self a-drowning with his cup.

IV.

Up thro' the vines, her urn upon her head,
Her feet unsandal'd, and her dark locks free,
She takes her way, a lovely thing to see,
And like a skylark starting from its bed,
A glancing meteor, or a tongue of flame,
Or virgin waters gushing from their springs,
Her hope flies up—her heart is pure of blame—
On wings of sound—she sings! oh how she sings!

TO THE CICALA.

I.

BLITHEST Spirit of the Earth,
Happy as incarnate Mirth,
Minion, whom the Fairies feed,
Who dost not toil, and canst not need,
Thine odorous ark a forest bough;
While Summer laughs as fair as now
I will not feast, or drink of wine,
But live with thee, and joys like thine.

II.

Oh! who may be as blithe and gay
As thou, that singest night and day,
Setting the light and shadows green
A-flutter with thy pulses keen,
And every viny glen and vale
A-thrilling with thy long long tale,
And river bank and star-lit shore
With thy triumphs flooding o'er.

III.

When the wild Bee is at rest,
When the Nightingale hath ceased,
Still I hear thee, reveller, still,
Over heath and over hill;
Thou singest thro' the fire of noon,
Thou singest till the day be done,
Thou singest to the rising moon,
Thou singest up the unrisen sun.

IV.

Into the forest I will flee,
And be alone with Mirth and thee,
And wash the dust from Fancy's wings
With tears of Heaven, and virgin springs;
Thou shalt lead me o'er the tops
Of thymy hills, down orchard slopes,
Past sun-lit dell, and moon-lit river,
Thou shalt lead me on for ever!

V.

Lord of Summer, Forest-King,
Of the bright drops the breezes fling
Down upon the mossy lawn
In the dim sweet hours of dawn,
Clear as daylight, pure as Heaven,
Drops which the Midsummer Even
Weeps into pale cups silently,
I will take, and drink to thee!

VI.

Just as I raise it to my lip,
Plumed Oberon shall dip
His sceptre in, and Puck shall dive,
And I will swallow him alive;
And on the vapor of that dew
He shall rise, and wander thro'
My brain, and make a sudden light,
Like the first beam that scatters night.

VII.

Then shall I hear what songs they sing
Under the fresh leaves in the Spring:
And see what moon-lit feasts they hold
Under a Lily's roof of gold;
And, when the midnight mists upcurl,
Watch how they whisk, and how they whirl,
And dance, and flash from earth to air
Bright and sudden as a star.

VIII.

They shall dance, and thou shalt sing;
But they shall slumber, Court, and King,
They shall faint, ere thou be spent,
And each shall seek his dewbell tent,
And Titania's self shall tire
And sleep beneath a wildrose briar,
Ere thou be sad, ere thou be still,
Piper of the thymy hill.

IX.

Oft, at the first still flush of morn,
The soft tones of some charmed horn
I shall hear, like sounds in sleep,
Waft o'er the greenwood fresh and deep,
From magic hold, where Giants thrall
Beauty in some airy hall,
And a plumed lover waits
To burst the spell before the gates.

X.

When the sun is hot and high,
I will rest where low winds sigh,
And dark leaves twine, and rillets creep,
And send me, with thy whir, asleep;
And softly on some prison'd beam
Shall quiver down a noonday dream,
Wherein thy ceaseless note shall tingle,
And the sweet-toned waters mingle.

XI.

A dream of Faery, where a million
Of winged Elves a rare pavilion
Build for Love amid the green,
The fairest Summer-house e'er seen;
While some their silver trowels ring,
Others opal blocks shall bring,
And with quaint laugh, and music fine,
Pile them in the sunny shine.

XII.

Monarch, thy great heart is more
Than treasuries, if thou be poor;
Tho' few the days that to thee fall,
They are long, and Summer's all;
Minstrel, tho' thy life be brief,
Thou art happier than the chief
Of mortal Poets, for thy song
Is fed with rapture all day long.

XIII.

Thee, in thy fresh and leafy haunt,
Nor Wealth can bribe, nor Penury daunt,
Nor Glory puff, nor Envy tear,
Thy drink the dew, thy food the air;
Oh! could I share in thy delight,
And dream in music day and night,
Methinks I would be ev'n as thou,
And sing beneath a forest bough.

XIV.

Nor Pain, nor Evil canst thou see,
Thou fear'st not Death, though it must be,
Therefore no Sorrow lights on thee,
Or mingles with thy melody,
From want thy jocund heart is free,
Thou livest in triumphant glee,
Thou diest, shouting jubilee!
A God—save Immortality!

ZEPHYRUS.

I.

THREE hours were wanting to the noon of day,
When long-hair'd Zephyrus flying from the Sun
O'er the green, wooded uplands wing'd his way,
And left the plains where freshness there was none;
Amid the Western clouds, and shadows gray
He thought to slumber till the day was done,
And up he clomb into a realm of wonder,
With towers, and domes, and pyramids of thunder.

II.

The wild birds mourn'd for him, the wild flowers sent
Their sweets to call him back, they fain would keep;
The trembling leaves sigh'd farewell as he went,
The thunders spread their banners o'er his sleep;
Silence stood sentinel before his tent,
And hush'd the earth, and breathed upon the deep;
On a gold cloud his curly head he laid,
And dream'd of virgin buds, and morning shade.

III.

Three hours were sped since noon—when Zephyrus, free
Of slumber, leapt up and began to sing,
And ran, and dipt his foot into the sea,
And then an arm, and then a shining wing,
And moved upon the waters gloriously;
The waters at the touch of their own king
Quiver'd unto their springs with joyful fear,
And made low answers silver-sweet to hear.

IV.

The glassy ripplets first began to throng
Each to the smooth shore like an eager hound;
Then a faint murmur like a whisper'd song
Crept o'er the tawny sands; and then a sound
Of a far tumult waxing near and strong;
And then the flash, and thundering rebound
Of powers cast back in conflict, and the moan
Of the long, banded waters overthrown!

THE GARDEN.

I.

At noonday set me under mountain trees,
Where I may quaff the breezes from the seas,
And hear the woodlands surge and sway—and feel
My fainting life renew'd from head to heel,
And see the shadows o'er the champaign stream,
And hear the Ocean murmuring like a dream.

II.

And for my pastime I will take the scroll
Of some great Bard—and, if he stir my soul,
I will arise and look across the land
To where the plumed waves craze upon the strand,
And the dark waters throb with silent star
And lightningflash, like Battle seen from far.

III.

Over the valley I will cast mine eyes,
O'er dale, and stream, to where the City lies
In midday splendor, all its length afire
With dizzy beams that dart from dome and spire,
The while its torrent voices upward throng
Thro' the still glory soften'd to a song.

IV.

Or when the fervent day begins to drowse
Past noontide, set me under garden boughs,
Before mine eyes a nook of golden flowers,
And the faint spirit of the sunny hours
A-dying at my feet in odorous sighs,
And one sweet child with laughter-lighted eyes.

V.

And when the Hours have well nigh dropt asleep,
Let mighty gusts, strong as a cataract, sweep
Into the valleys, tossing on their flood
The blossom locks of orchard, heath, and wood,
And fling live spirit into the faint Day,
Like a glad voice to one who dies away.

VI.

And sometimes let a Cloud's great brows of thunder,
Lifting me from my page with thrill of wonder,
Pour down cool breath; and, frowning into gloom
The slope lawns, fill my nostrils with perfume,
Rapt from the Forest's heart ambrosial,
Where gleam fresh dews that hasten not to fall.

VII.

And let me hear from woody aisles aloof
The culver's lovechant underneath a roof
Of woven green; and see thro' opening trees
The golden harvest laughing from the leas;
And let quaint moths, soft-plumed Summerlings,
Shadow my page with their emblazoned wings.

VIII.

And sometimes let a ringing hoof go by
Echoing among the upland forestry,
And hills that girdle round my Garden bower;
And let a fountain with its singing shower
Dash o'er my temples its pale dews, and fling
On Summer's flashing eyes the veil of Spring.

IX.

Let whispering poplars, or a warbling bird
Sometimes amid the slumberous hush be heard,
Or silver tongues of children at their play,
Or household tongues in converse; or a lay
Full-voiced trance me deep, while I unroll
Future and Past—Life, Death, and my own Soul.

THE FOREST.

Part I.

I.

In the hot hours when scarce the whir is heard
Of the bird's wing, or murmur of the bee,
Where the leaf-shadows tremble on the sward,
To the wild forest come away with me;
I know a dewy green where you may lie,
And dream you hear from the embowered glades
Low laughter twinkle, and sweet music sigh,
And faint away among the pillar'd shades.

II.

I know a lake upon whose surface pass
Trembling soft pictures of the Summer treen,
And as we gaze into that magic glass
The sloping woods with their high walks are seen;
Keep thou thine eye upon the azure water,
And when its mirror ruffles with the air,
I'll show thee many a rosy forest-daughter,
Satyr, and wild-eyed Hamadryad there.

III.

I'll show thee sun-brown Faun with Woodnymph playing,
Or twining wreaths of eglantine and rose,
Or on soft moss the tawny muskgrape laying
For Pan, who takes his afternoon repose
Upon deep flowers, and virgin green—to slake
His thirsty ardors, when at set of day
From his enchanted dreams the God shall wake,
And see the shadows turn'd the other way.

IV.

And sometimes Bacchus shall go reeling by
Where the deep forest leaves a lawny dell,
With flute, and twisted wand, and sunlit eye,
Amid the rose-crown'd Mænads, with a swell
Far off of mingled voices musical,
And for a moment, in a stream of light,
Thou shalt behold the viny festival
Sweep by like dream, and glitter out of sight!

V.

If thou shouldst slumber in a thicket near,
The grasshopper shall wake thee up with glee,
And hidden rillets bubbling in thine ear
Shall float off the soft hours with melody;
Thy curls uplifted by the Zephyr sleek
Shall make thee dream of some beloved hand
Laid in thy hair—a kiss upon thy cheek—
And one dear face the loveliest in the land.

PART II.

I.

A SOUND of fluttering leaves begins to run
From side to side, and the farflying fawn
Glances athwart green glooms, or in the sun
Peers tremblingly, or shoots across a lawn:
From mossy glens, and tops of breezy hills
I hear the bugle wail, and bowstring keen,
Green plumes move with the leaves, wild laughter thrills,
From sylvan valleys, and dark gulphs of green.

II.

Look where the forest slopes unto the lake,
And the brisk winds that curl the Summer trees
Leap to the brink, their morning thirst to slake,
Caught from the sharp rocks and the parched leas;
The evening waters now begin to sing
Over the swart sands, and three Oreads tall
From oak-tree arms a crimson awning swing,
Whose ruby shadows o'er the mosses fall.

III.

As tho' the blushing turf-plot saw, and knew
The Virgin Huntress with unzoned limbs!
For now a lucent shoulder fresh with dew
Dawns o'er the waters, as she shoreward swims,
Now leans she on the pebbles with her hand,
And lifts herself amid her long bright hair,
Now with her Nymphs she shoots across the strand
Peerless in grace and stature, pure and fair.

IV.

And now she sits in rosy light and veils
Her innocence, and to the silver sound
Of falling ripplets she begins her tales
Of summer pastimes sought with horn and hound;
At every pause young girls with kirtles green
Taking their little lyres of gracious mould
Sing antique songs, and strike the strings between—
Echoes, and shadows of the Age of gold.

V.

Oh! I could tarry under these green boughs,
In these deep coverts, all the Summer long,
If only one sweet Nymph with sunny brows
Would teach me all her ancient woodland song,
Till I had learn'd such pure and simple breath
As pour'd into the dusty ears of Kings
Would make them thirsty for a wildrose wreath,
Turfwalks, and thymy slopes, and fresh cold rills.

THE GLORY OF NATURE.

I.

If only once the chariot of the Morn
  Had scatter'd from its wheels the twilight dun,
  But once the unimaginable Sun
Flash'd godlike thro' perennial clouds forlorn,
And shown us Beauty for a moment born;

II.

If only once blind eyes had seen the Spring,
  Waking amid the triumphs of midnoon;
  But once had seen the lovely Summer boon
Pass by in state like a full-robed King,
The waters dance, the woodlands laugh and sing;

III.

If only once deaf ears had heard the joy
Of the wild birds, or morning breezes blowing,
Or silver fountains from their caverns flowing,
Or the deep-voiced rivers rolling by;
Then Night eternal fallen from the sky;

IV.

If only once wierd Time had rent asunder
The curtain of the Clouds, and shown us Night
Climbing into the awful Infinite
Those stairs whose steps are worlds, above and under,
Glory on glory, wonder upon wonder!

V.

The Lightnings lit the Earthquake on his way;
The sovran Thunder spoken to the World;
The realm-wide banners of the Wind unfurl'd;
Earth-prison'd Fires broke loose into the day;
Or the great Seas awoke—then slept for aye!

VI.

Ah! sure the heart of Man, too strongly tried
By Godlike Presences so vast and fair,
Withering with dread, or sick with love's despair,
Had wept for ever, and to Heaven cried,
Or struck with lightnings of delight had died

VII.

But He, though heir of Immortality,
With mortal dust too feeble for the sight,
Draws thro' a veil God's overwhelming light;
Use arms the Soul—anon there moveth by
A more majestic Angel—and we die!

THE TWINS.

Two children from the mighty Mother sprung,
And ancient Time; twin Titans, huge in limb;
The firstborn with surpassing might was strung,
The younger had his mother's heart in him:

The One was fierce, and from his nostrils stream'd
Smoke in his wrath; all writhen was his hair;
With Pride, like globes of flame, his eyeballs gleam'd;
The Other was all boon as he was fair.

These Earth-born Giants strove with one another
To master all the World; the elder-born
Claim'd all things for his birthright, but his brother
Full-arm'd in adamant smiled a godlike scorn:

The one before him rolling clouds and flame
Trod with an earthquake step that toppled down
The crested Cities; but the other came
And built with music cities of his own;

And while He lay on piles of smoking walls,
And slumber'd after his tormented years,
Sow'd the black furrows of his thunder-balls
With amaranth flowers, and water'd them with tears:

And in the pauses of the battle thunder
Were heard such songs, that steely warriors sigh'd,
And wounded men forgot their pain in wonder,
And dying eyes look'd up, and prophesied:

And when the shout of war, and trumpet-sound
Roused those two brothers to the strife again,
The new-built towers and citadels were crown'd
With godlike shapes that mock'd the strength of men:

Thenceforth nor iron hosts with banners flying,
Nor swords, nor trampling hoofs, nor raging fire,
Could kill those flowers that from amidst the dying
Rose full of life, and higher sprang, and higher.

SONG OF AN ANGEL.

I.

At noon a shower had fallen, and the clime
Breathed sweetly, and upon a cloud there lay
One more sublime in beauty than the Day,
Or all the Sons of Time;

II.

A gold harp had he, and was singing there
Songs that I yearn'd to hear; a glory shone
Of rosy twilights on his cheeks—a zone
Of amaranth on his hair.

III.

He sang of joys to which the earthly heart
Hath never beat; he sang of deathless Youth,
And by the throne of Love, Beauty and Truth
Meeting, no more to part;

IV.

He sang lost Hope, faint Faith, and vain Desire
Crown'd there; great works, that on the earth began,
Accomplish'd; towers impregnable to man
Scaled with the speed of fire;

V.

Of Power, and Life, and winged Victory
He sang—of bridges strown 'twixt star and star—
And hosts all arm'd in light for bloodless war
Pass, and repass on high;

VI.

Lo! in the pauses of his jubilant voice
He leans to listen: answers from the spheres,
And mighty pæans thundering he hears
Down the empyreal skies:

VII.

Then suddenly he ceased—and seem'd to rest
His godly-fashion'd arm upon a slope
Of that fair cloud, and with soft eyes of hope
He pointed towards the West;

VIII.

And shed on me a smile of beams, that told
  Of a bright World beyond the thunder-piles,
  With blessed fields, and hills, and happy isles,
And citadels of gold.

LOVE'S ANNIVERSARY.

I.

On this same day, ah! mighty years ago,
Amid the balmy shadows of this grove
Surely I saw the powerful God of love
Pass by in light, and heard the golden bow.
A voice I heard, and oh! it trembles yet
Within me like a charm'd æolian lyre,
A face I saw, but 'tis for ever set
Upon my heart as with a seal of fire!

II.

Sure there was magic music in these woods
That blessed morn I walk'd abroad with Her,
The light was charmed, and the subtle air
Was kindled with the spirits of the Gods!
Careless we murmur'd what the Poets sing,
We mused of Immortality and Time,
What Hope may image, and what Nature bring,
Our hearts were fresh and sunny as the clime.

III.

At morn I look'd in her soft eyes divine,
And fear'd not their calm deeps of tender blue;
I look'd again ere midday—then I knew
had been blind, for scales were cast from mine;
Once more I look'd—it was the top of noon,
Just then the God flew armed thro' the skies,
And like a picture color'd by the Sun,
I saw his shadow threatening from those eyes.

IV.

His first-drawn arrow came with silent breath,
His second pass'd with sighing, without pain;
The third, like lightning, clave my heart and brain;
The fourth was taken from the quiver of Death;
So let me die, I murmur'd, nor complain—
But when the angry God had spent his stings,
That voice spake softly, and I lived again,
She smiled—I rose to Heaven upon his wings!

V.

Oh! when I gazed in those enchanted eyes
Where tears and light in orbs of azure sleep,
Methought I saw beneath the waveless Deep
Inlaid with splendors from the moonlight skies,
Where treasures gleam, and secret fountains rare
Leap up from floors of hyaline far below;
Or look'd thro' Heaven, and saw the utmost star
From the hush'd Empyrean throb and glow.

VI.

Methought I had awoke in Paradise
Newborn, with Youth that never should decay;
All sense of Life and Change had fled away,
Of Fear, and Ill; I pored into those eyes,
And all I loved to see in Nature's face,
And days to come, and memories of years,
Spirit, and Form, methought, and Time and Space
Were orb'd together in those azure spheres.

VII.

There was a time when only the green earth,
The sky star-peopled, and the blissful air,
The mighty World and all the marvels there
Fill'd my immaculate heart with love and mirth,
And gave it strength and sweetness—now instead,
I was a Spirit without eyes or ears;
But thro' storm-clouds methought I could have fled
With her unharm'd, thro' thunders, and thro' fears.

VIII.

Slowly I pass'd from the unearthly mood
Of that omnipotent Hour, like one whose eyes
Blinded with sudden lightning from the skies
Have felt the finger of a healing God;
And then, O wonder, still another change
Was wrought—I saw, as thro' a rainbow dew,
The Heavens fill'd with light divine and strange,
The ancient Earth, and lo! it was as new!

IX.

Gazing around I mark'd with faithful eye
Things far and near, the hills, the lawns, the bower,
That the mere memory of that blessed hour
Might brave all sorrows of Futurity;
As shadows tremble on a running stream,
Yet stir not ever, from that hour to this
On each new year of life that deathless dream
Sheds the still quivering image of its bliss.

X.

Ev'n as I look'd, the glory of the Earth
Became more beautiful—my quicken'd sense
Throbb'd with a more divine intelligence,
And mortal Being had another birth;
No Painter ever wrought thro' years of pain
A piece of Art so full of harmony,
As Memory on the tablets of the brain
Wrote with the magic moments fleeting by!

XI.

Methought the silver-winged clouds upcurl'd
Above the mountains, robed in Summer light,
Took forms of conscious triumph in their flight,
And breathed down shadows that renew'd the World;
Wild gusts of Southwind stormy in their joy
Tost the green leaves, and peerless rose of June,
And thro' the scattering boughs I saw the sky
Dark with great light of Summer, and of Noon.

XII.

No canker yet had fray'd the fresh young green,
No stain was on the lily's full-blown bell;
Warm winds breathed blisses it were hard to tell,
Gold light wove hues the fairest ever seen;
And glorious Nature stream'd forth over all
Her richest incense from a thousand urns
In honor of the heart's great festival,
That godlike day that never more returns.

XIII.

'Twas but a moment that had changed my heart
From love of all things to the love of One;
But its great shadow is the unshaken throne
Of Memory, and shall never more depart;
Since first I breathed the subtle phantasy
Into my being, with a Spirit's eyes
The charmed spot with all its spells I see
Wherein she gave my heart that sweet surprise.

XIV.

Sorrow and Time have made my pulses slow,
And drawn a veil between that hour and this,
But still that mighty thought, 'twixt pain and bliss,
Thrills me with echoes from the days ago;
In all things changed, but that alone, once more
I tread these ancient, mossy walks again,
These murmuring woods I seek, this rivershore,
Where perfect Beauty pass'd, and I was slain!

XV.

It is the selfsame month, the selfsame day,
The very hour; again the happy South
Wafts down from the dark Heaven Delight and Youth,
And sways the boughs, and fresh-plumed roses gay;
The skylark pours the selfsame song from high;
The silver clouds stand in the selfsame place;
But where, oh! where is the Divinity
That stirr'd me then—that voice, that youthful face?

XVI.

Ah! could we see our first-born Love appear
Oft as his birthday marks the round of Time,
More blessed were a desert than the clime
Of Eden, penury than the cups of Jove!
That voice, more sweet than Summer to the heart,
More tuneable in its simplicity
Than all the wreathen harmonies of Art;
That glance, as swift as arrows from the sky!

XVII.

Then, tho' the noon were shadow'd with dismay,
The brain with care, the soul with sorrow laden,
One golden hour would dawn, old ills to gladden,
Joy's lovely ghost, Despair's brief holiday;
Again the heart would leap within the breast,
The eye would lighten, and the lips would sing,
The frost of Time would feel the sweet unrest,
And Winter days reblossom with the Spring.

XVIII.

Immortal Day, altho' thou com'st in vain,
Still, O beloved Phantom, thou art here
Sunny, and fair; so, while I live, appear;
Still in the selfsame dress come back again;
Thou every leaf, and every flower restore,
And every beam, and shadow in the sky,
That I may dream great Love is passing o'er,
And clasp his image till the day I die!

ADELAIDA.

I.

O ADELAIDA, gentle, fair, and true;
Did Nature, when she cast thy perfect heart
In the pure sanctuary of her Art,
Take Diamond, and dissolve it to a dew?

II.

Did she take fixed Lightning in her hand,
And with it bathe thy pure Intelligence,
Thy nimble Fancy, and thy subtle Sense,
A linked armour nothing may withstand?

III.

Did she rob Zephyrus of his long soft hair
To plait thy locks for thee? and in thine eyes
Pour the clear essence of the glad blue skies,
And cut thy gleaming forehead from a star?

IV.

Fair Creature, art thou of Mortality,
With that great Spirit bound in slender frame,
Whose quenchless, and unconquerable flame
Makes weakness strong, and frailty brave in thee?

V.

My days were dark before I saw thee shine,
But they are daily brighter since that day;
And, should thy flower of beauty pass away,
Still would thy winged heart rule over mine!

VI.

Thy locks are fairy-fine, thy limbs are slight,
But in thy Spirit Strength and Beauty lie,
As on the magic mirror of the eye
The Sun can shape an image of his might.

VII.

Not iron hosts could dazzle thy calm eyes,
Nor mighty thunders stay that little hand
Arm'd with the force of right, as with a wand,
And bent on victory, or self-sacrifice.

VIII.

The tender beauty of a moon-lit night,
The glory of the Earth on Summer-days,
The lovely spirit of a human face
Do stir thy heart, or melt it with delight;

IX.

The lofty deeds of Men—the starry ways
Of Knowledge—linked troubles flung in vain
O'er godlike souls that arm themselves in pain,
Do move thy love, thy wonder, and thy praise.

X.

To thee Despair's dim countenance is known,
And Hunger with its palsied steps; thy tears
Will flow when others' sorrow fills thine ears,
Altho' thou rarely weepest for thine own.

XI.

When thine own griefs thy blissful eyes o'er-cloud,
Let but another's for their solace pine,
And they will cease to weep—Oh! they will shine
Like Hope's own phantom bursting thro' her shroud!

XII.

Thou hast a heart attuned to all things fair—
Thou hast blue eyes of joy—a merry voice—
But canst yield up the World, and all thy joys,
And do for Love what Pride would never dare;

XIII.

Thou couldst in darkness, and a dungeon be,
Far from the sounds of Life, and songs of Youth,
With none but me to watch thee, and to soothe,
So that I love thee as thou lovest me!

WOMAN.

I.

If Love and Truth could move the springs
Of this great World of men and things,
Then set a Woman on the throne
Of all the Earth—and her alone.

II.

Ah! then a sigh would glad our eyes,
As though the gates of Paradise
Should fly asunder, and be seen
The evergreens and light between!

III.

Ah then 'twould be long Summer-day,
As though the rolling earth should stay
Its course against the Summer Sun,
And in its joy forget to run!

IV.

Her love, like sunshine, o'er the land
Would flow, and compass heart and hand
Farther than Battle's crimson eye
Can glare, or ashy Ruin fly.

V.

But Man with his progressive force
Must hold the planet in its course,
And bid it, as it turns, unfold
All aspects, that it ne'er grow old.

VI.

While She is weaving in her loom
Flowers pluckt at every honor'd tomb,
With faithful eyes content to see
In Good that is whate'er shall be;

VII.

While the Muses near her lying
Hymn holy sorrow, bliss undying,
And mingle with their minstrelsies
Melodious echoes, and sweet sighs;

VIII.

While She sits gazing on the Past,
Let Him go by with armed haste;
While She is fix'd in love and wonder,
Let Him rush on with fire and thunder.

IX.

While She sings thro' the evening hours,
Let Him repass her fadeless bowers
With banners, and triumphal cries,
And festal songs, and victories!

X.

Yet Oh! if God be Love for ever,
And Peace the end of all endeavor,
Man's strength encumber'd by his sins
Oft fails to end where She begins;

XI.

Let Him remember in his pride,
While She is weeping by his side,
That Heaven may spare the stronger one
'Mid his ill deeds, for Her alone!

THE VINE.

On craggy summits which the lightnings score
And noonday beams, thou, curly-headed Vine,
Fill'st thy brave heart with warmth and purple wine,
And in thy strength increasest more and more,
And beauty, till the fiery days are o'er,
And sun-brown Autumn from thy tresses wrings
Drops for the golden chalices of Kings,
And brims the earthen vessels of the poor:

So doth the Poet in his days of prime
From pains, and passions that afflict his heart,
From joy, and sorrow, and the storms of time,
Draw the clear nectar of almighty Art,
And sheds his heartdrops in a gracious dew
That heals all other hearts it passeth thro'.

The earth is thirsty, yet thy veins are full;
The herb is shrivell'd, yet thy leaves are green;
The chaff lies withering where the grain hath been,
Ere yet thy clusters they begin to cull;
The latest fruits when they have ceased to pull
The red grape dances in the breeze of heaven,
And laugheth in the light of morn and even
With amber leaves, when summer flowers are dull.

So doth the Poet in his latter time
Feel God within when other hearts are cold;
When Avarice cannot delve, Ambition climb,
His step is onward, and his heart is bold;
And when his hair is white with many years,
His eye is full of hope, and unshed tears.

And when thy leaves that were so large and fair
Are whirl'd away before the rushing wind,
And in the wintry vineyard none may find
One haggard cluster out of all that were,

When hill and dale are desolate and bare;
Thy ruddy dews are sparkling in the light
Of the illumined hearth, and festal night,
Thy golden wave brings back the summer air!

So doth the Poet, from the earth departed,
Out of the darkness of Oblivion pass,
And to the happy, and the broken-hearted
Sings of his joys and sorrows—all he was;
Till his pale spectre is of vaster span
Than he—the Memory nobler than the Man!

FLOWER AND FRUIT.

I.

A LITTLE child lay on its mother's knee
In shade of Summer boughs; and that fond mother
Waved in one hand the flowers of a wild tree,
And a fair branch of fruitage in the other.

II.

Longing he lay, and glancing his blue eyes
From one to other—for his will was loth
To fix its choice—he sigh'd his firstborn sighs,
Stretch'd out both arms, and would have clutch'd them both.

III.

A gray old man peep'd thro' the leaves, and bless'd
That lovely child—then sadly turn'd apart,
And sitting down a little from the rest
Sigh'd, as he murmur'd thus to his own heart;

IV.

Within the Violet's cup no nectar flows,
Tho' its rich breath fills the delighted air;
When the ripe fruit is glistening on the boughs
The lovely blossom is no longer there:

V.

When the young Sun is arming him at morn,
His beauty makes sweet rainbows in the sky;
But when his wheels are up the Zenith borne
He hath no power for such soft magist'ry:

VI.

When the swift heart of the enchanted boy
Speaks through his downy cheeks, and starry eyes,
An hour of love is worth eternal joy,
And beauty all the treasures of the wise;

VII.

But when the time-worn heart begins to bud
With leaves of Truth, like the Autumnal green,
No pulse of rapture stirs the drowsy blood,
Scarce stirring with the pulses that have been.

VIII.

Ah me! in what immortal hour of Time,
Under what star, in what enchanted weather,
In what new Eden, in what fairy clime,
Nature, shall thy perfections meet together?

IX.

When youthful hearts, rejoicing in their May,
Shall bide in cheerful faith the unborn hour,
And the wise spirit not regret the day
That brings the fruit, but takes away the flower?

X.

When Hope and Love, so lavish of delight,
Shall laugh and sing, yet crown their early years
With those rare buds more odorous than bright,
And that wise spirit now the growth of tears;

XI.

Ah! vexed Life, there is no other wand
But Death's cold finger—take him for thy friend—
He leadeth Truth and Beauty hand in hand,
He brings thee Youth and Knowledge without end

MARTHA.

I.

A FAIR white Rose across thy casement swinging,
In its white innocence a type of thee;
A wild bird fluttering in a breezy tree,
Dewy with dawn, and in the twilight singing,
And with its music back unto thee bringing
Sweet childlike hopes, and memories flown away,
And that glad thought that once again 'tis May;
A sound of waters down the valley ringing;

A Summer air breathed in upon thy brows
Laden with leafy sweets from holts below,
While thro' the dark stems, and the rustling boughs
The fires of Dawn begin to throb and glow;
Such are the sights and sounds that to thee borne
Cheer thy lone heart, and wake thee up at morn.

II.

The Maker knows the spirit and the form
Of his own works, and loves what he hath made,
From cloudtopt pines to lilies lowly laid,
From Heaven to Earth, from Angels to the worm;
Or sure one sight were dearer to his eyes
Than all the fashions that the World affords,
One voice were sweeter than all Poets' words,
One heart more pure than any sacrifice,

Thou from good dreams, kindhearted Hermit, waking,
And breathing up into the dewy air
With the first glimmer of the morning breaking,
Thy free thanksgiving, and thy faithful prayer,
And singing, till the merry woodland throng
Hush their own peal to listen to thy song.

III.

Dear Village Maid, who from thy little store
Of Knowledge, and of Riches, canst supply
The flower and fruitage of Humanity,
Balm for thyself, and comfort for the poor;

I never pass the woodbines round thy door
But in my heart there swells a wistful sigh—
Oh! could I change all gawds of Vanity
For peace, like thine, increasing evermore!

By day thy sweet face passing thro' the gate
Is welcome as the bounty-bearing light,
Thy frugal lamp is to the desolate
A star of promise, dawning thro' the night;
Oh! if all hearts were only lit like thine
Night would not be, tho' stars should cease to shine!

IV.

Look how the Glowworm shining in the shade
Illumines the dark leaf whereon it lies;
No fixed star above it in the skies,
Nor moonbeam thro' the cloudy midnight stray'd
Unto its tiny fire have lent their aid;
So thy sweet spirit fulfill'd with love alone
Warms with the sunshine roundabout it thrown
A few fond hearts whose treasure there is laid.

Along thy bowery walks no pomps are seen;
No lofty passions flatter them or thee;
Thy days, like tendrils of an evergreen,
Twine round the steadfast form of Charity;
Thy thoughts are tender, and thy words are true,
Thy blessings fall as soundless as the dew.

V.

I love the shadows of thy chamber dim,
The sacred place of Purity and Peace,
With soft lights quivering thro' o'erhanging trees,
Love's balmy bower where Sorrow looks for him;
There new-blown roses, lavender, and thyme
Breathe like an early world; there lapse to rest
Proud thoughts, like wild birds, in a welcome nest,
And daily cares as to an evening hymn.

First on the threshold wistfully I wait
To catch thy voice among the busy birds,
Some dear old song sublime with Love and Fate,
Some solemn utterance of the Holy Words,

And entering softly see thy ready cheer
Break thro' the twilight of a lingering tear.

VI.

Ofttimes I mark thee, while the village tower
Takes the first glow of the newrisen morn,
Bending among the tombs like one forlorn;
There is thy Mother's grave; there, sun or shower,
Art thou, and there is cherish'd every flower
She loved the best, and 'tis thy secret trust,
That in the blossoms springing from her dust
Lives something of her to this very hour.

There on the sabbath day mayst thou be seen
The first of all, the last to linger there;
Sweet memories of her virtues come between
Thy whisper'd words, and mingle with thy prayer,
And aged women doom'd to endless toil
Stay by the porch, and weep with thee, or smile.

VII.

And when great dames avenging little wrongs
Glance on by hall and bower, by field and fair,
Or, ere the banquet, lisp, ''tis hard to bear,'
Or weep at eve in gems to sound of songs;
To thee, kind Angel, oh! to thee belongs
To minister unto the sick man's brow,
Unmark'd of eyes thy tears in silence flow,
Thy faithful sighs unheralded of tongues.

How oft hast thou rebuked thee, if a word,
If but a whisper of the poor man's need
Hath reach'd thee, and thy fondest hope deferr'd,
Lest, when thy heart was merry, his should bleed;
We saw thee—and thine eyes more brightly shone
With effluence of his gladness than thine own.

VIII.

'Oh! sure,' some said, 'to her kind Heaven hath dealt
Freedom from earthly penance, that can share
The common ills of others, and their care;
Surely so free a heart hath never felt

The fetters of great sorrows, that can melt
With simple tears, and laugh with simple joys:
Alas! they had not heard the hidden sighs
Folded within thy conscience pure of guilt:

There was another heart that answer'd thee;
He grew beside thee, till your hopes were one;
Far off he sleeps, afar beyond the sea;
And thou hast vow'd thro' Death's great gates alone
To pass unto thy bridal—and to lay
His image near thee on thy dying day.

IX.

When thou wert laid in sickness and in pain
Thro' one sad Autumn—oh! the falling leaf
Fell gentlier by thy casement in its grief,
And still, as holy tears, the evening rain;
Methought the hamlet ne'er would wake again,
So mighty was the sorrow and the calm;
And children wail'd, and many a wither'd palm
Was raised to Heaven for thee—and not in vain.

The meek, the rugged, wept beside thy door,
The evil-minded took another way;
And fewer were the murmurs of the poor
For their own troubles than thine evil day;
And when another Mayday brought thee forth
Something from Heaven had fallen on the Earth.

X.

I saw thy garden gate stand open wide;
There was the untrimm'd box, the latter flowers
Leaning thro' the dusk day of stilly hours,
As tho' to hear thy voice so long denied;
Drooping, as tho' thy welcome hand supplied
No more the life they only loved for thee;
Pining, for thy remember'd charity,
Stay'd with faint hope that keeps by Sorrow's side.

Fair was the Winter of that woful year
And sunny calm—and swiftly came the May;
The throstles piped as fondly to thine ear
As tho' they loved to bid thee back to day,

And the first nightingale from over sea
Sang by thy bower, and brought new life to thee.

XI.

O heart of grace, that, like the lowly flowers,
Bendest beneath the storms, but dost not break,
Whom in thy tears kind thoughts do not forsake,
As blessed odors live in thundershowers;
Whether the sun shines forth, or tempest lowers,
Thou art unshaken—in thine utmost need,
While iron pride is shatter'd like a reed,
Thy winged hopes fly onward with the hours.

Therefore thine eye thro' mist of many days
Shines bright, and beauty, like a lingering rose,
Sits on thy cheek, and in thy laughter plays,
While Wintry frosts have fallen on thy foes;
And like a Vale, that breathes the Western sky,
Thy heart is green, tho' Summer is gone by.

XII.

Whatever be my lot, I pray that thou
Mayst see a cloudless Autumn of thy years,
Whose Summertide hath been o'ercast with tears;
Tho' like the clouds, that vainly overflow
The deep clear sky, they have not dimm'd thy brow,
Or darken'd the quick flame of Liberty
Lit at that eye, which fashion'd it and thee;
Be thine a Vale where Western breezes blow

The livelong year, where thou mayst walk at Even
'Mid cherish'd flowers along a garden slope,
And breathe in peace the purity of Heaven,
And turn unto the Sun with eyes of hope,
With sweet birds every morn to make thee cheer,
And sound of living waters in thine ear.

ARIEL.

I.

Oh! could I borrow for a Summer's day,
Ariel, thy strength and speed, I would ascend
High as the utmost peaks, and thence extend
My happy wings along the sunny way,
And into realms of Wonder sail away!

II.

First would I run to meet the Morn on high,
And on the eldest beam wing back my flight,
And set my foot together with the light
On the haughtiest pinnacle, and with a cry
Scare the lone eagles forth into the sky.

III.

At noonday I would seek the Tropic clime,
And down the giant rivers idly borne
See palmy isles, and pathless plains unshorn,
Look on untrodden gardens in their prime,
And steepy forests ancient and sublime.

IV.

And sometimes lying near the ice-cold springs
Of Andes, or Himala, gaze far down
O'er woodland slope, far stream, and old gray town,
And dream I see through azure openings
Of cloud gold armour, and barbaric Kings.

V.

And on the chariot of a cloud supreme
Ride o'er the mountaintops, o'er land and sea,
And bathe my wings in sunbows, and be free
To mark the cataracts leap, the torrents gleam,
The avalanche burst away, the shadows stream.

VI.

With ancient beauty I would feast my soul
And solitary terrors—without fear
I would behold the yawning earth, and hear
The quenchless fires go forth without control,
And o'er the pines, and blazing cedars roll.

VII.

And I would leap impregnable to harms
Into the Earthquake's cradle, and below
Watch the eternal mystic furnace glow,
And hark the shrieks, and cries, and dim alarms
Far down, and clashing of infernal arms.

VIII.

And on a shower of sunbeams I would pour
Thro' a cloud-arch a song so piercing sweet
Of Liberty and Life, that to their feet
Blind captives springing from their dungeon floor
Should hope to see an Angel at the door.

IX.

I would wake up the Northwind from his sleep;
And take him by the hair and turn him back;
Or wait within the coming Torrent's track;
And down from off a thunder-shaken steep
Rush down with eager storms into the deep.

X.

I would untwist the Typhoon—I would dare
The shattering hailstones, with unarmed hands
Would pass between the Lightning's dazzling brands,
And hear the gurgling streams and prison'd air
Run up and down the spiral cloudy stair.

XI.

And o'er the wildernesses I would fly,
See the sands whirl, and hear the Samiel scream,
And swiftly skim along the ocean-stream
When the long calms are waking, and be nigh
To mark the dim-eyed Hurricane rolling by.

XII.

To mark the Sea thrown back from mountain shores
Of basalt isles, or on swart deserts hurl'd;
Or lash'd along some cavern's echoing floors;
Fired by the sun, and by the tempest curl'd—
Wonder, and dread, and glory of the World!

XIII.

Then would I rise and part, and dwell awhile
In palaces with walls of diamond builded,
And spires by the unsetting sunlight gilded,
And when the breath of Summer shook the pile
Sail South again upon a moving isle.

XIV.

And I would scale, when Heaven began to throw
Its fiery darts, great battlements of storms,
And towers, and bulwarks bright with awful arms,
And hear the dread winds, and the thunder flow
Under the rainbow's arch afar below.

XV.

On streams of sunset with rose-islands glowing
At Eve I'd sail, and in cloud-shadow wait
Under the great emblazon'd Western gate,
To see the Sun pass in, in haste, with flowing
Banners, and golden arms, and trumpets blowing.

XVI.

And after sunset thoro' dark and damp
I would sink down beneath the Sea and Land,
And catch a shooting star, and in my hand
Bear it thro' caves of death, and with that lamp
Wake up pale Gnomes, and Giants stiff with cramp.

XVII.

And when my long day of delights was done,
Unto a column of earth-lightning clinging,
That back unto a zenith cloud was springing,
Smoothly I would go up, and slumber soon
Wrapp'd in warm folds kiss'd by the Summer moon.

THE BLACKBIRD.

I.

How sweet the harmonies of Afternoon!
The Blackbird sings along the sunny breeze
His ancient song of leaves, and Summer boon;
Rich breath of hayfields streams thro' whispering trees;
And birds of morning trim their bustling wings,
And listen fondly—while the Blackbird sings.

II.

How soft the lovelight of the West reposes
On this green valley's cheery solitude,
On the trim cottage with its screen of roses,
On the gray belfry with its ivy hood,
And murmuring mill-race, and the wheel that flings
Its bubbling freshness—while the Blackbird sings.

III.

The very dial on the village church
Seems as 'twere dreaming in a dozy rest;
The scribbled benches underneath the porch
Bask in the kindly welcome of the West;
But the broad casements of the old Three Kings
Blaze like a furnace—while the Blackbird sings.

IV.

And there beneath the immemorial elm
Three rosy revellers round a table sit,
And thro' gray clouds give laws unto the realm,
Curse good and great, but worship their own wit,
And roar of fights, and fairs, and junketings,
Corn, colts, and curs—the while the Blackbird sings.

V.

Before her home, in her accustom'd seat,
The tidy Grandam spins beneath the shade
Of the old honeysuckle, at her feet
The dreaming pug, and purring tabby laid;
To her low chair a little maiden clings,
And spells in silence—while the Blackbird sings.

VI.

Sometimes the shadow of a lazy cloud
Breathes o'er the hamlet with its gardens green,
While the far fields with sunlight overflow'd
Like golden shores of Fairyland are seen;
Again, the sunshine on the shadow springs,
And fires the thicket where the Blackbird sings.

VII.

The woods, the lawn, the peaked Manorhouse,
With its peach-cover'd walls, and rookery loud,
The trim, quaint garden alleys, screen'd with boughs,
The lion-headed gates, so grim and proud,
The mossy fountain with its murmurings
Lie in warm sunshine—while the Blackbird sings.

VIII.

The ring of silver voices, and the sheen
Of festal garments—and my Lady streams
With her gay court across the garden green;
Some laugh, and dance, some whisper their love-dreams;
And one calls for a little page; he strings
Her lute beside her—while the Blackbird sings.

IX.

A little while—and lo! the charm is heard,
A youth, whose life has been all Summer, steals
Forth from the noisy guests around the board,
Creeps by her softly; at her footstool kneels;
And, when she pauses, murmurs tender things
Into her fond ear—while the Blackbird sings.

X.

The smoke-wreaths from the chimneys curl up higher,
And dizzy things of Eve begin to float
Upon the light; the breeze begins to tire;
Half way to Sunset with a drowsy note
The ancient clock from out the valley swings;
The Grandam nods—and still the Blackbird sings.

XI.

Far shouts and laughter from the farmstead peal,
Where the great stack is piling in the sun;
Thro' narrow gates o'erladen waggons reel,
And barking curs into the tumult run;
While the inconstant wind bears off, and brings
The merry tempest—and the Blackbird sings.

XII.

On the high wold the last look of the sun
Burns, like a beacon, over dale and stream;
The shouts have ceased, the laughter and the fun;
The Grandam sleeps, and peaceful be her dream;
Only a hammer on an anvil rings;
The Day is dying—still the Blackbird sings.

XIII.

Now the good Vicar passes from his gate
Serene, with long white hair; and in his eye
Burns the clear spirit that hath conquer'd Fate,
And felt the wings of immortality;
His heart is throng'd with great imaginings,
And tender mercies—while the Blackbird sings.

XIV.

Down by the brook he bends his steps, and thro'
A lowly wicket; and at last he stands
Awful beside the bed of one who grew
From boyhood with him—who with lifted hands,
And eyes, seems listening to far welcomings,
And sweeter music than the Blackbird sings.

XV.

Two golden stars, like tokens from the Blest,
Strike on his dim orbs from the setting Sun;
His sinking hands seem pointing to the West;
He smiles as though he said 'Thy will be done:'
His eyes, they see not those illuminings;
His ears, they hear not what the Blackbird sings.

TO PHANTASY.

I.

O CHARMING Sprite, if thou wilt let thee down
On beam, or sunbow from the morning sky,
And shape thy bodiless Divinity
But for a day, I'll give thee for thine own
A Summer seat, where choicest dreams shall crown
Thy noonday musing; rock-born waters chime
Oblivion, and the wingless Zephyrs climb
But half the boughs by odors overthrown:

Here ev'n by day a holy silence broods,
Save when the Wind a-dream among the woods
Wakes suddenly, and from green gulphs below
Wafts up the sweet sighs of their hidden flowers,
Sending a blissful shudder thro' the bowers,
With the low song of rivulets in their flow,
And then long hours again without a breath,
But the lone lovesong of the doves beneath.

II.

Thro' garden groves which haughty Mountains save
From the wild World, and many a curving path
Tented with purpling vines o'ercomes the wrath
Of the noon Sun, and gurgling runnels lave,
I'll bear thee o'er flower'd mosses to a cave,
Where the fierce light shall faint and die away
To deepest night, thro' twilights soft and gray,
But thou shalt hear far off the rippling wave.

I will unsandal thine immortal feet
Amid the dimness of this hush'd retreat,
And set them on a plot of dewy green
So fresh to look on, and so soft to feel,
The very sight, and touch of it shall heal
Thy soul o'ertask'd with glories it hath seen;
And serve thee under gloom of shadows cold
A flashing drink in cups of woven gold.

III.

Far off blown boughs shall dapple the deep sward
With glooms, and thro' the leaves gold shafts shall lean
Of peremptory light, and on the green
Touch the dim flowers with blandest Summer stirr'd,
Or the swift glitter of a passing bird;
And, ere the shadows swallow up the light,
Thine eye shall seize the momentary flight
Of eager hunters streaming by unheard.

Thro' the fresh leafage near thee thou shalt gaze
O'er the far champaign with its busy ways;
And catch the stir of life—the strife, the song,
The triumph—see the silent gleam of arms,
And soft as music hear their wild alarms,
See funerals pass, and bridals, as they throng
The temple gate—all things shall reach thee there
Wrapp'd in soft mantle of the distant air.

IV.

When 'twixt dark holes and twinkling leaves is seen
The throbbing light, and dizzy shapes are spun
Out of the restless boughs, and westering sun,
Thou wilt behold pale Daphne run between
The evening trees with flown locks, or the Queen
Of Maidenhood go by with horn and hound,
Or Pan start up from slumber to the sound,
Or rose-wreathed Mænads whirl across the green:

Or Ariadne with one shoulder bare,
Her mantle torn, like beautiful Despair,
Forlorn, and wan, and mad with griefs and fears,
While the crush'd roses wound her flying heels,
Shunning the shouts, and riot, and onward wheels
Of the young God who seeks her in her tears,
And with an eye lit like an evening star
Flush'd Evan bending to her from his car.

V.

When o'er the West the ruddy bands are lying,
And dark the groves without, and darker still
The gloom within—thine ever eager will,
Thy lens of wonder, and rapt vision prying
Will see sweet shapes across the shadows flying;
And haply Cytherea with wild hair,
And lamp, that shows her beauty wan with care,
In piteous quest of her Adonis dying.

And, when the Day is ended, thou wilt come
Forth from thy grot into the starlit gloom;
For when the Sun is fallen from the skies,
Thou hearest the far voices of the Past
Like midnight bells that murmur o'er a waste,
Its mirth, its songs, its laughters, and its sighs;
And lov'st to listen to the distant Sea
Uttering dark thunders, like Eternity.

VI.

Upon a cushion of the rich red rose
I'll lay thy head, with flowers of jasmin pale,
That ev'n in sleep thy spirit shall inhale
Their blisses with the westwind as it flows
Into the shadowy place of thy repose,
And thou shalt dream such dreams as shall remain
To-morrow like rare music in thy brain,
And charm the weary-hearted of their woes.

I ask no other guerdon for my love,
Than to lie hidden near thee in the grove,
To hear thee touch thy harp, to hear thee sing,
Or sigh, or whisper with the wind and stream;
Or sleeping, snatch from under the white wing
That veils thine eyes, the murmurs of thy dream;
But, ere thou partest, Goddess, wise and fair,
Spare me one leaf of Amaranth from thine hair.

THE THREE BROTHERS.

I.

INTO his gorgeous halls the Painter led
The Poet with his volume in his hand;
He said—'All these I have accomplished,
In form and hue like very Gods they stand:
And Death and Fate I vanquish, if I please,
With shadows, and mine only foe is Time;
Can any come in glory like to these
Out of thy dim and melancholy clime?'

II.

In twilight sanctuaries there were seen
Shapes more than Man, the Mighty that had been;
Wonder and love flow'd round them like a psalm
Lock'd in eternal strife, or throned in calm:
Giants of marble, Demigods and Kings,
Who with their names, like overshadowing wings,
Darken the Earth's faint light, and little span;
Whose deathless beauty mocks their maker Man.

III.

The rapturous Musician bade unbind
The spirit that obey'd him when he will'd,
And blisses sweet as odor, fleet as wind,
Pass'd from him, and the solemn dome was fill'd;
He breathed enchanted breath that o'er the sense
Trembled, like fiery light on crisped streams,
And lull'd the painful soul, and bore it hence
Into a land of moonlight and of dreams.

IV.

Evening came down, and darkness closed around
Those shapes, and silence swallow'd up that sound;
But He his magic volume did unroll,
And show'd the threefold image of his soul;
He show'd them fix'd therein the fluttering thought
That Music scatters, into substance brought,
And godlike moments, which the Painters strive
To bind with fetters, moving and alive.

MORNING.

PART I.

I.

'Tis Morning, the great Morn, that lightens forth;
Divinest Morning, ever glad and new,
Still strong and young as at her primal birth,
A glory more than dream, yet living-true;
Great Altar flaming between Heaven and Earth;
Great Hymn forever sung, forever due;
Morning the front of God, the hope of Man,
That tells of Him more than all visions can.

II.

Oh! when I see the Morning in the skies,
The Summermorn! from out the vale of tears,
And Time's gray sorrows I lift up mine eyes,
As one who sees far triumphs, and who hears
The ancient gates of the first Paradise,
Barr'd to the World so many thousand years,
Move back to waves of melody and a voice,
'Come enter, lost ones; turn ye, and rejoice!'

III.

And hand in hand with winged feet alight
Swift Angels sent on mighty ministries
Down the fire-cataract that o'erwhelms the Night;
They touch the earth, and change it—and with these
The faces of old friends bring new delight;
They charm forth Good, they charm the Ill to cease;
Their glory floods the spaces more and more,
And wins the World like rising tides the shore.

IV.

They stretch their wands before them starrily,
And all the faint Creation dim with sighs
Trembles with bliss like light along the Sea,
To nether darkness gray Affliction flies,
Void shadows teem with strange fertility,
Waste places sink, and plumy mountains rise,
And their great voices hymn in harmony,
'All things are new. That is, that was to be!'

PART II.

I.

Oh! when the light comes up the rosy skies
And Westward breathes the blessed early beams,
Fancies, like sunmotes, flit across mine eyes,
Swift, circling Spirits, such as come in dreams;
I sail into the past Infinities
Along the broad flood of the sunny streams,
And the great mountainpeaks I seem to climb
Into the deep, immortal, ancient time.

II.

And with unhooded eyes I can behold
The firstborn Genii with their wings unfurl'd
For endless flight, and hear the thunders roll'd
Whose everlasting echoes shake the World;
Lo! godlike Presences, great Kings of old,
Grasping the quenchless lightnings to be hurl'd
In their fresh youth, and morning strength, come forth,
And shade their brows to look upon the earth!

III.

I see the primal Giants fresh from sleep
Arming for conquest, and great trumpets holding,
Whose stormy blasts along the sunlight sweep
Thro' fiery gates of morning cloud infolding;
The mists blow by—on every mountainsteep
Burn panoplies of light and lances golden,
Broad banners streaming o'er the mountain realms,
Proud plumes, new armour, and unbruised helms.

PART III.

I.

I FEEL the heart within me dance and sing
Oft as at morn I see the mountains blue;
I long to dive into the golden spring
Of the upwelling dawn that gushes thro'
The sombre glens; and with a mighty wing
Soar o'er the starry peaks, thro' silver dew,
Into that realm of Faery where the Queen
Of Wonder doth on piled amaranth lean:

II.

She leans, and listens to a Fairy Muse,
That on a harp wreathed with wildroses rings
Notes sparkling, as the drops that Summer strews
Off from the plumes of Dawn—and hark! she sings
Of marvellous isles that quaff the gorgeous hues
Of happy sunsets, and gush ruby springs
And amber streams, where Fancy waxeth strong
On divine nectars, and immortal song.

III.

There momently young Genii are bringing
Fresh-gather'd flowers of Joy, or balm for tears;
There not a tongue but is for gladness singing;
There not a face grows older for its years;
Lovedreams by night, and marriagebells a-ringing
With each new day in our enchanted ears;
And neither death, nor dole, nor fears, nor care,
But Life fresh-plumed with the fresh morning air.

PART IV.

I.

HARK! on the topmost step of yon great stair,
That broadens earthward from the cloudy towers
A Seraph stands, and on the burning air
Sends his clear voice: he sings of bridal flowers,
And bridal gems that they are scattering there;
'Come hither, come; in these enchanted hours
In sight of Gods Love shall be wed to Joy,
And Beauty unto Immortality!'

II.

And straightway he throws back great gates of cloud,
And far within lo! walls of diamond,
Streets of a new-built city, and a crowd
In robes of light pass in to see them crown'd;
I heard, like torrents on the wind, their loud
Acclaim, and Victory! roll'd from bound to bound,
Victory, Victory! and with that cry
Death, like a flying shadow, vanish'd by.

III.

I listen; and from out the shadows dun
Far voices, as of triumph, flow to me;
I hear great music soaring with the sun,
And golden thunders eddying like a sea;
To that Celestial revel I will run
And stand beneath the rushing light, and see
Those peaceful Giants, those twin kings of bliss,
Come down with wealth of other worlds to this.

EVENING.

I.

HUSH! it is Even, dark-eyed Even,
With her low song, and tender sigh,
Soft-utter'd voice of Earth to Heaven
Witness'd by one sweet star on high;
On wheels of rayless flame she passeth by,
And Peace sits by her clasp'd unto her heart;
Hatred, relent; and, Care, forget thy smart,
And, Anger, droop thine eye.

II.

Dusky Memories throng her way,
Bright Fancies from the shadows peep,
And Hopes that panted in the day
Sadly hide their eyes and weep;
Lorn Griefs look up into the balmy sky,
Plumed Love upon the soundless air comes out,
And Wit he bears his wavering lamp about,
Despair seeks where to die.

III.

Fly with her yon howling cave
Loud with riot, red with flame,
Where haggard Passions whirl and rave
And Phrenzy links her arms with Shame;
Revenge uncoils the serpents round him curl'd,
And Murder steals abroad with perilous hand;
And Treason whispers grim, and lights his brand
To fire a slumbering world.

IV.

Fly with her the golden doors,
Thro' whose valves thrown open wide
The trumpet-streaming Revel pours,
And Folly haunts the ears of Pride;
And Nature, like the King at Babylon,
Dazzled with glories, with enchantments bound,
Hears not the momently increasing sound
Of Judgment rolling on.

V.

Rather let us stroll with her
By river-slopes, and orchards green,
Where soft and fragrant thickets stir,
And the last daylights gush between;
Or, when the tides are sunken to their bed,
Wave her godspeed upon the silent sands,
As She sails far, far off to rosy lands,
And Night is Queen instead.

VI.

Rather, while all the air is mute,
And flowers breathe rare from closing bells,
Let us listen to her lute,
And hear her sing divine farewells;
While dying echoes fall upon our ears,
For ever dying thro' the misty hills,
And mix with murmurs of the mountain rills,
And Twilight drops her tears.

VII.

Rather with her seek the chamber,
That fond Hesper, twinkling thro'
The vines that o'er the lattice clamber,
Every moment peeps into;
And some kind mother softly steals above
From friend, and lover, to her sleeping boy
And on his cheek all flush'd with dreams of joy
She sets her seal of love.

VIII.

Sometimes let us seek the cell
Where the Poet, far apart,
To two or three he loveth well
Works the wonders of his art;
And from his coloured lamp and golden lyre
Peoples the Past with voices and with light,
And scrolls Futurity's unfathom'd night
With symbols, and with fire.

IX.

And when the stars are o'er us burning,
  And the Moon is dawning slow,
And the nightingale is mourning,
  From his porch we'll softly go;
And memories of his music shall descend
  With the pure spirits of the sunless hours,
  Sink thro' our hearts, like dew into the flowers,
And haunt us without end.

X.

Blessed art thou, O dark-eyed Even,
  Thou, and thy tender handmaids true;
Send us thy mercies down from heaven
  Daily with the falling dew;
Dusk flowers to heal the bleeding brows of Sorrow
  From thy soft chaplets fail not to untwine,
  And pour into our tortured hearts, like wine,
Sweet dreams until tomorrow.

THE FISHERS' HYMN.

I.

HARK! 'tis the weary Fishers' Evening hymn;
The day is ended, and the toil is o'er;
The ropes are coil'd, the sails are furl'd and trim
The nets are dry, the boat is on the shore;
The sunset glows along the purple bound;
They sit and look toward the Western gold,
And mingle with the solemn vesper sound
Of the sunk tide their voices young and old.

II.

With a low silver-tongued monotony
The little billows whisper as they fall;
Calm is the forehead of the outer sea
As though it would not reawake at all;
But yestermorn like mountains earthquake-shaken
The waters sway'd against the dawning light,
And now they lie like Sorrows overtaken
By weary sleep that cannot wait for night.

III.

Hark! 'tis the weary Fishers' evening hymn,
A lowly Alleluia, mournful-sweet;
But thro' the harpstrings of the Cherubim
That music flows unto the Mercy-seat;
An ancient voice; a grateful sacrifice;
The suffering tones of uncomplaining Time;
Faith wrapt in weeds; Hope folded up in sighs;
The heart of Nature sadden'd but sublime.

IV.

Laid at their feet in love as strong as life,
With upward eyes, that fill with happy tears,
The sorrow-worn and patient-hearted wife
Holds up her tender child the heir of fears:
More dear is she than on her bridal day,
More dear his face whereon she loves to dwell
Than priceless pearls, and treasures cast away—
Her welcome sounded wild as her farewell

V.

The passing anguish of remember'd pains
Drags back to Earth the notes that soar to Heaven;
Dread as a dream the shade of Ill remains,
Their awful hearts are as the gray of Even;
A burst of exultation, and of praise—
A sadden'd cadence closing notes of cheer—
For tho' they have been snatch'd from woful days,
That which they fear'd, and fled, is still to fear.

VI.

Welcome as waters to the wilderness
Shed back upon the waste from which they spring,
Those solemn harmonies go up and bless
The overladen souls of them who sing:
Ye whom care stifles and disasters chill,
Ye of the faint heart, and whose faith is dim,
O ye impatient of the touch of Ill
Hark! to the weary Fishers' evening hymn!

VII.

Fear not, nor faint; remember Him who took
The lowly hearts of simple men and poor,
Fill'd them with strength, and taught them words that shook
The Earth, and bridged the Seas from shore to shore;
Remember Him—He stands among ye there—
He weighs the earnest sigh, the steadfast will,
The toil, the love, the peril, and the care;
For He who walk'd the Waters walks them still!

THE STARS.

I.

SISTERS of Earth, and Daughters of the Sun,
Who gaze on Him, and in his glory share,
Have ye no winged messengers to bear
Some tidings of the things that ye have done,
And suffer'd since the ancient Days begun?

II.

Since those high splendors down upon us rain'd,
Are there no mighty songs that ye have sung,
No holy triumphs out of Evil wrung,
No thunder-vollied victories ye have gain'd,
Or hath no wrong those happy isles profaned?

III.

Are the far spirits that inhabit ye
  Scarr'd with deep sin by Saints to be atoned?
  Or crown'd in primal Honor, and enthroned
In their immaculate felicity
And still rejoicing immortality?

IV.

Do they draw strength each moment from the Giver
  Of Life, and with unflinching eyes behold
  Glories to Bard or Prophet yet untold,
And hear the unfailing Oracle deliver
Voices, and lightnings, issuing for ever?

V.

Doth Sorrow walk on those illumined floors
  Follow'd by Death? Doth Mutability
  Waste and renew your atoms? When we die
Do our pale Phantoms flock unto your shores
O'er the great Ocean which your light explores?

VI.

Oh! will those hearts, that might not flourish here,
Find there a fitter clime, and put forth flowers?
Tempestuous Passion breathe serener hours,
Fond Love behold an ever-vernal year,
Pale Grief, and Care an ever-sunny sphere?

VII.

Will secret instincts fathomless to men
Clasp sympathetic natures, and unfold?
Great thoughts to understanding ears be told?
Sad Spirits fetter'd unto years of pain
Cast off remembrance, and grow young again?

VIII.

Lovely ye be—and while I marvel still,
Still must I think, that under those sweet beams
That breathe from ye, like love, upon our dreams,
There is no conscience dark, no rebel will,
No heart of living thing that throbs with ill.

IX.

Ye sumless Hosts, that stretch beyond the sight,
And pass away for ever—are ye trod
Like dust by the departing steps of God,
As He sends forward thro' the abysmal Night
His mighty voice that turns the Dark to Light?

X.

Doth the great cry of Lamentation stream
Thro' all your Stars, and echo to the Throne
Where He abides unshaken and alone,
Behind empyreal battlements supreme,
That show Creation dimmer than a dream

XI.

And if I whisper in mine inmost heart,
'Couldst Thou be happy if the Truth were so?'
Ye wakeful Spirits that around us flow,
Bear not away that thought, lest, when ye part,
With mortal woe ye make the Blessed start!

XII.

Ah! no, no—rather let me think of Thee,
That nearer still, and nearer, hour by hour,
Thy Coming shines—thy Truth, thy Glory and Power—
Till this dim weeping Home of ours shall be
Lit by thy Presence—One to hear and see!

THE MOUNTAINS.

PART I.

I.

UPON the icy mountain-top alone
I only hear the beatings of my heart,
Sunburst, and shower, and shadow, earthward thrown
Like mortal fortunes, for a moment shown,
Go by me, and depart.

II.

There is no voice to talk with me so high;
The secret spirit of the desert place
Answers not to me; and beneath me lie
The World, and all its wonders; Death and I
Are standing face to face.

III.

And from the torrents, and the caves ascend
Temple of cloud, dim king, and sun-lit God,
Angels, with aspects changing without end,
Visions of power and glory earthward bend,
And sceptered Giants nod.

IV.

A sunbeam cleaves the misty gulph, and lo!
As thro' great gates unfolding in the sky,
Valleys, and plains, and rivers past me flow,
And silent cities glittering from below
Like phantoms, hover by.

V.

So from the far-off mount of Poesy
The World's great shows, like the hush'd champaign, seem;
The Actual, Insubstantiality;
Real, what is shaped in Fancy's eager eye;
Fear, Love, a hope, a dream.

VI.

Glorious is he, who on that sovranty
Makes a far beacon of his soul sublime;
Blessed is he, who from the illumined sky
Can reach the murmurs of Humanity,
And hear the voice of Time.

PART II.

I.

THE spirit of the Poet, like the form
Of the high mountains, cleaves the heavens asunder,
And flies into far realms of fear and wonder,
And howling wildernesses where the storm
Goes darkly with its thunder;

II.

Or soars with quiet pinions where the light
Of sun, and stars, eternal and the same,
Awake upon the unapproached height,
Looks down serenely on the stormy night
Of whirlwind, cloud, and flame.

III.

Within the lone high places of his soul
Love, and Ambition, like the frost and sun,
Pile up great towers, or drive the earthquakes on,
Let loose the winds, or bid the torrents roll,
Or make the rivers run.

IV.

And when the proud world, tyrannous and strong,
Tramples frail hearts into the dust of scorn,
Rathe flowers of Spring within his breast are born,
Fresh streams of pity murmur in his song,
Fresh breezes of the morn.

V.

The unborn Future lightens on his brow,
As on the topmost cliffs the dawning East,
Memories, like glory pour'd back from the West,
Live in his heart, and in his music glow,
When summer-days have ceased.

VI.

In his own land his ever-wakeful eye
Stands sentinel, like an unsetting star;
The glory of his Immortality
Like the great peaks that glitter in the sky,
Burns, and is shown afar.

VII.

And when vast cycles, rolling wars and woes,
Have laid in darkness lesser lights between,
Far as the utmost age, or friends or foes,
His mighty spectre, like the eternal snows,
Shall soar up, and be seen.

A SUMMER TEMPEST.

I.

Dark frowns were cast; ill words were spoken;
She wept, as though her heart was broken;
But when I saw her bitter tears
I thought of all our pleasant years;
I sigh'd—ah! Death were better than that sight—
To die with love unbruised, than live with sorrow;
'This sunless day shall never have its morrow,'
I cried, 'if sever'd hearts can reunite.'

II.

The storm shriek'd wildly thro' the bowers,
And dash'd to earth the Summer flowers;
The rain it fell from morn till even;
I mourn'd like Spirits cast from Heaven;
The roses shone against the sombre air,
Like the drear torches at a funeral
That glare beside the overhanging pall;
The wind swept by lamenting like Despair.

III.

I wiped the tears from her sad eyes,
I hush'd her lamentable sighs,
I calm'd the pulses of her heart,
I cried, no, no, we shall not part!
This dark-wing'd hour of passion in its flight
Shall open Heaven again, and Love shall rest
In peace, and, like the glory in the West,
Shall kiss the parting clouds with blessed light.

IV.

Ah! fatal ill, to live in strife
With one I love beyond my life;
Should clouds of contumely pass
'Twixt hearts that should be as a glass
Each unto each? 'Tis not so wild and drear
When whirlwinds dim the sun, and thunders fly
Between the blue sea and the summer sky,
As when the faith of Love is turn'd to fear!

V.

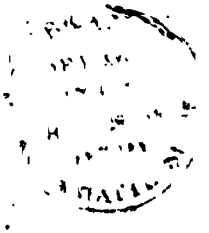
Open not the ark of Peace;
Look not forth on stormy seas;
Lest Love's swift wings should flee away,
And come no more for many a day;
Tempt not again the olive-bearing dove,
That once had brought ye the fair branch from far,
Lest he should fly where safer coverts are,
From thriftless hearts that have abandon'd Love.

VI.

Tender flowerets may outlive
The frosty nights of Spring, and thrive;
When the shrilling Eastwinds cease,
The orchard blossoms bear increase;
But lovers' hearts may not abide the breath
Of angry Scorn—Oh! that untimely wind
Sheds their fair youth, and leaves no hope behind,
Save dark Oblivion, and the peace of Death.

VII.

Heart to heart again was laid,
I was not sad, nor she afraid;
I kiss'd her lips, I kiss'd her brow,
She murmur'd, 'I am happy now;'
The winds were slumbering on the breast of Even,
Fainter and fainter grew the wasting rills,
Like youthful tears that weep away their ills;
And one sweet star look'd down, like Love, from Heaven.



THE RAINBOW.

REJOICE, it is the rainbow hung on high,
Bridging the rack with splendors; and behold,
A mighty host ascending to the sky
On that great arch of glories manifold.

And with the soft wind breathing from the West,
Betwixt the storm's dread voices backward hurl'd,
Surely I hear the pæans of the Blest
Waft in sweet thunders down upon the world.

Great Love victorious over Fate is there,
Bathing his wings in light; and Hope I see
Singing into the dull ears of Despair;
Faith wedded unto wild Calamity:

And thou, that charmest sorrow, Phantasy—
Wizard, that fillest up the gulph of time
With echoes of empyreal harmony,
And carven structures that we long to climb:

Pity and Sorrow there together stand,
And look upon the earth, and kiss each other;
Beauty and Gladness go up hand in hand
From this unsteadfast world into another:

But sweeping rearward on the stormy streams
I see the lightning-stricken roll beneath,
Pale Fear, the king of lamentable dreams,
Blind Fortune crownless, and the phantom Death:

And the disarmed Giants, Hate and Pride,
Float down the dismal torrent in dismay;
And War and Woe, twin children, side by side
Upon the dying thunder roll away:

But I am left upon the earth alone,
Far from the sun-built arch that waves above;
Lift me, ye blessed shapes that stand thereon,
To Heaven—O Hope, Faith, Phantasy, and Love!

THE TEMPLE.

I.

A SHEPHERD-POET from a mountain land
Near a proud temple's open portal stood;
By lavish streams of odors he was fann'd,
And heard the hosannas of a multitude;

II.

The soaring temple seem'd a holy world,
And in its beauty was almost divine;
He stood in wonder while the incense curl'd
Round the tall columns, and the golden shrine;

III.

He heard the music rólling like a flood
With thunders based, and eddying echoes piled;
He saw the giant shapes of man and God
Glorious, in domed sanctuaries 'isled:

IV.

He bow'd his head, and all that glory shook
His steadfast soul; but then he thought again
Of his green valley, and its rippling brook,
And the meek songs of poor and holy men.

V.

Sweet words of peace and power, like blissful charms,
The Highpriest utter'd from his carven throne,
And clasp'd his hands, and raised his purple arms,
As though to teach humility by his own;

VI.

He bow'd his head, and all that golden speech
Sank, like a lovely melody in his ears;
But then he thought how mountain hermits teach
Love with rough words, but prove it with their tears.

VII.

He took his staff, he fled into the light,
Far from that perilous beauty manifold,
Lest his enchanted ears and dazzled sight
Should scorn the Presences they loved of old;

VIII.

Beyond the City walls he fled in haste,
He left its dust, its tumult, and its sound,
And soon beheld long vales, and mountains vast,
Their kingly heads with storm and lightning crown'd;

IX.

He saw the gulphy bosom of the woods
Surge in the wind; he saw the rivers wide
Glittering in silence, and the spanless floods
Of Ocean purpling on the other side;

X.

He saw the plumed clouds go by in state,
And shapes of mighty stature bodied forth,
Of pleading Angel, or of armed Fate,
Throned in the air, and gazing on the earth;

XI.

The soft wind stirr'd the grass, and thickets green,
Wild wood-notes stream'd around, rare odor-showers,
Glad springs, and silver rillets lisp'd unseen
Under the briary shades, and tangled flowers;

XII.

He saw a shadow swallow up the day
Like coming Judgment, and again the sun
Flash forth, and turn to gold the glooming gray,
Like Mercy that repents ere ill be done:

XIII.

And then he cried, 'Oh! shall mine eyes forego
The glorious temple of the eternal skies
For all the frail magnificence below,
And words of love for cobwebs of the wise?

XIV.

Oh! if their ears could hear, their eyes could see
All that in this great world sublimes the heart,
Spirit, what need of other shrine for thee,
Or mutter'd mysteries, or fantastic Art?

XV.

When gilded shadows of the Fancy win
More lovers than the sacred face of Truth;
When o'er the ancient skeleton of Sin
Lie the warm folds of beauty and of youth;

XVI.

When juggling pomps, and masked mockeries
Ape the bold steps by Freedom only trod,
When monstrous Idols hide from human eyes
The face of Nature, and the throne of God;

XVII.

Woe to that land, how bright soe'er it shine!
Its air is thick with shapes that have no breath;
Tho' rich with milk and honey, corn and wine,
Its name is Darkness, and its King is Death.

XVIII.

Better the icy wind, the sunshine dim,
Better the thousand storms that shake the free,
The torrent thundering to the Sabbath hymn,
Or the deep voice of the unchained Sea!

XIX.

All-powerful Spirit, Universal King,
Let others seek thee under marble piles,
Where the lamps tremble, and the censers swing,
And waved anthems stream through arched aisles;

XX.

In that high Temple, which Thyself didst frame;
And dost inhabit, I will look for Thee,
Whose roof is Night, whose lamps are worlds of flame,
Whose mighty bases are the Earth and Sea;

XXI.

Where Life and Death, thy Ministers, attend,
And with dread voices chanting of all things
From the great Deep draw echoes without end,
Immeasurable Giants, clothed with wings.

XXII.

Thine orisons, the worldwide voice that fills
The morning air, the clouds thy censers be,
Thine altars, the inextinguishable hills,
Thy music is the Thunder and the Sea.

XXIII.

On silent plains, on solemn shores untrod,
Amid great Mountains where it daily swells,
That holy music, I will worship God,
And listen to the awful Oracles.

LOVE AND THE MUSES.

I.

'Oh where is Love?' the weeping Muses said,
'Thro' the wide world we seek for Love in vain;
Our ancient harps shall never ring again,
For Love, our Master Love, has fled;
With him Joy's festival is o'er,
And blue-eyed Truth shall return no more,
Beauty is banish'd from our shore,
And Melody is dead.'

II.

Some said 'He dwells in cedarn chambers hung
With silk and gold; from odorous lamps he lights
His dying torch thro' pleasant Summer nights;
Or hears delicious music sung
In twilight temples of Repose,
Where thro' the gilded lattice flows
South air from noonday plots of rose,
By some enchanting tongue.'

III.

Some said again—'He loves the gloomy shine
Of torrent waters, and the morning star,
The dewy vales, and verdurous slopes afar
Dark with the sombre mountain pine;
He loves to scent the crush'd wild thyme
Under his heel, the ancient chime
Of village bells is more to him
Than all the vocal Nine.'

IV.

But others answer'd—'Ye must look for him
Where Summer suns without a shadow shine,
Along the champaign, underneath the vine,
In moon-lit gardens hush'd and dim;
Or on breezy shores of rivers smooth,
Where after noon he loves to soothe
His toil with songs of sunburnt youth,
And joins the dancers trim.'

V.

A village damsel spoke with eyes in tears;
'Ah! me—He loves the wild unfaithful seas;
The sound of bursting billows, and the breeze,
Is sweeter to his cruel ears
Than all our songs, and merry mirth,
Upon the green, or by the hearth;
Soft looks, and sighs are little worth
To one who follows fears.'

VI.

'Oh! where is Love?' the weeping Muses said;
Thro' the wide world we seek for Love in vain;
Our ancient harps shall never ring again,
For Love, our Master, Love is dead,
No more—ye answer us in vain—
Within your hearts he did remain,
Within your hearts he hath been slain
By Avarice, Fear, and Pride!'

HARVEST HOME.

Come, let us mount the breezy down,
And hearken to the tumult blown
Up from the champaign and the town;

Lovely lights, smooth shadows sweet
Swiftly o'er croft and valley fleet,
And flood the hamlet at our feet;

Its groves, its hall, its grange that stood
When Bess was Queen, its steeple rude,
Its mill that patters in the wood;

And follow where the brooklet curls,
Seaward, or in cool shadow whirls,
Or silvery o'er its cresses purls;

The harvest days are come again,
The vales are surging with the grain;
The merry work goes on amain;

Pale streaks of cloud scarce veil the blue,
Against the golden harvest hue
The Autumn trees look fresh and new;

Wrinkled brows relax with glee,
And aged eyes they laugh to see
The sickles follow o'er the lea;

I see the little kerchief'd maid
With dimpling cheek, and boddice staid,
'Mid the stout striplings half afraid;

Her red lip, and her soft blue eye
Mate the poppy's crimson dye,
And the cornflower waving by;

I see the sire with bronzed chest;
Mad babes amid the blithe unrest
Seem leaping from the mother's breast:

The mighty youth, and supple child
Go forth, the yellow sheaves are piled,
The toil is mirth, the mirth is wild!

Old head, and sunny forehead peers
O'er the warm sea, or disappears
Drowned amid the waving ears;

Barefoot urchins run, and hide
In hollows 'twixt the corn, or glide
Towards the tall sheaf's sunny side;

Lusty Pleasures, hobnail'd Fun
Throng into the noonday sun,
And 'mid the merry reapers run.

Draw the clear October out,
Another, and another bout,
Then back to labor with a shout!

The banded sheaves stand orderly
Against the purple Autumn sky,
Like armies of Prosperity.

Hark! through the middle of the town,
From the sunny slopes run down
Bawling boys, and reapérs brown;

Laughter flies from door to door
To see fat Plenty with his store
Led a captive by the poor;

Fetter'd in a golden chain,
Rolling in a burly wain,
Over valley, mount, and plain;

Right through the middle of the town,
With a great sheaf for a crown,
Onwards he reels a happy clown;

Faintly cheers the tailor thin,
And the smith with sooty chin
Lends his hammer to the din;

And the master blithe and boon,
Pours forth his boys that afternoon,
And locks his desk an hour too soon.

Yet when the shadows eastward seem
O'er the smooth-shorn fallows lean,
And Silence sits where they have been,

Amid the gleaners I will stay,
While the shout and roundelay
Faint off, and daylight dies away;

Dies away, and leaves me lone
With dim ghosts of years agone,
Summers parted, glories flown;

Till day beneath the West is roll'd,
Till gray spire, and tufted wold
Purple in the evening gold:

Memories, when old age is come,
Are stray ears that fleck the gloom,
And echoes of the Harvest-home.

DEATH AND THE SHEPHERD.

I.

VEIL'D in a golden haze of Afternoon
The light is trembling o'er the Western hills;
Hard by o'er rocks a mountain river spills
Its bubbling urn into the valley boon;
The pearly waters ruffle, as they run,
In the soft spirit breathing from the South,
And wild grapes, clustering o'er a cavern's mouth,
Flush with deep crimson in the evening sun.

II.

The purple champaign streaming like a sea
Far off between unfolding hills appears;
The sound of a great City in our ears
Swells, like a sunken tide, melodiously;
And, now and then, the distant plain is stirr'd
With bugle wail, or gleam of sylvan arms;
Or gray smoke wreathing o'er the busy farms;
Or dusty breath of homeward-wending herd.

III.

Under the forest roof the faint wind dies,
The birds are still; the echoes are asleep;
And thro' the arches green the sunbeams creep
Floating the dizzy gnats, and lazy flies;
An aged Shepherd in an oaken shade
Lay drowsily, and down the mossy ways
He turn'd his dreaming eyes, and with amaze
He saw fair shapes, half glad, and half afraid:

IV.

Shrill laughter from the grot is flooding forth
Of two wild Oreads, whose large eyes shine
Under clear temples shaded with the vine,
And good Silenus yields him to their mirth;
His arms are fetter'd in a jasmin band;
Forth from the curtains of each slumbrous lid
Shoot stars of joyaunce, often as they bid,
And the red cup is fallen from his hand.

V.

He heard sweet sounds; he saw the Graces dance;
'Ah! give me Youth, and I will give to ye
All my peace offerings to Adversity'
He cried—and his white hair grew dark at once.
''Tis well,' he said—'but what is flowing hair
And strength, without the blisses fed by gold?
Plutus, for thee the firstlings of my fold
I will provide, so thou wilt hear my prayer.'

VI.

And from amid the boughs the auspicious God
Silently stretching forth his potent hand
Flash'd in that Shepherd's eyes a golden wand,
As 'twere a sunbeam floating in the wood;
And therewithal was struck the cavern'd rock
Hid in wildflowers, and brambles o'er his head,
And when he look'd for dust, there rain'd instead
Some fair round pieces down upon his flock.

VII.

Between the knotty boles brown Satyrs glanced,
And star-ey'd Fauns; and Momus leaping out
From the dark umbrage with an antic shout
Made sport before the Nymphs when they had danced:
Again he said—'O gentle Momus, hear,
I cannot laugh with them, nor yet be merry,
For I have thoughts within I cannot bury—
Grant that, and thou shalt have three goats a year:'

VIII.

From the dry leaves he started up in haste;
He danced, and laugh'd, and laugh'd and danced; but still
His heart remain'd the selfsame seat of ill,
And cruel Conscience mock'd him with the Past.
'Oh! for some charm,' he cried, 'wherewith to cheat
Relentless Memory! when the heart is evil
Nothing's so cheerless as a merry Devil,
My heavy thoughts are fetters to my feet.'

IX.

A cold wind sigh'd among the trees, and Death
Lifted his crown'd head o'er a branch of pine,
Screening his armed hand in leaves of vine:
Softly, 'Why prayedst thou not to me?' he saith:
'Oh! whatsoe'er thou art,' the old man cried,
'I have done deeds that haunt me, in my youth;
Yield me, pale Power, oblivion of the Truth,
That I may live!' Death touch'd him, and he died.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

I.

God said, 'Bring little children unto me;'
And Man is likest God, when from his heart
Truth flows in its divine simplicity,
And love dwells in him working without art:
Children are Earth's fair flowers—the Crown of Life
A noble Woman—and he is refill'd
With hope who turns with love unto his Wife,
With love who turns with hope unto his Child.

II.

Oh! if no faces were beheld on earth,
But toiling Manhood, and repining Age,
No welcome eyes of Innocence and Mirth
To look upon us kindly, who would wage
The gloomy battle for himself alone?
Or thro' the dark of the o'erhanging cloud
Look wistfully for light? who would not groan
Beneath his daily task, and weep aloud?

III.

But little children take us by the hand,
And gaze with trustful cheer into our eyes;
Patience and Fortitude beside us stand
In Woman's shape, and waft to Heav'n our sighs;
The guiltless child holds back the arm of Guilt
Upraised to strike, and woman may atone
With sinless tears for sins of man, and melt
The damning seal when evil deeds are done.

IV.

When thirsty Suffering hath drunk up our tears,
And left the heart sere as an Autumn leaf,
From her fond eyes they fall for us; she cheers
With songs, and lights with hope the cloud of Grief;
When our sweet Youth for ever buried lies,
And we well nigh forget the thing we were,
Once more we meet him in the young blue eyes,
And laugh to see his resurrection there.

V.

When to the car of Vengeance and of Hate
We yoke ill thoughts, and memories hot from Hell,
'Tis She that stays us, like relenting Fate,
'Tis her weak arm that locks the crazing wheel;
Above the dust of conflict, and the jar,
She lifts a little child; her voice is heard
Piercing above the thunder of the War,
'Spare thou, that thine hereafter may be spared!'

VI.

And should they go before us on that way
That all must tread, and leave us faint with sorrow;
Should the great light of Love forsake our day,
Memory's bright moon bespeaks a sun-bright morrow;
Behold, the skies unfold! broad beams descend;
Beneath the Gods upon the golden stair,
Amid the upward glories without end,
At Heavengate they stand, and bid us there.

THE FIRST-BORN.

I.

Sick of the joys and sorrows of the world
I gazed upon my little sleeping child;
Above his brows the dewy lovelocks curl'd,
Upon his open lips his spirit smil'd;
'Ah! mightst thou ever be, as now thou seemest,'
I cried, and kissed him on that sinless brow—
'Thy life as peaceful as the bliss thou dreamest,
Thy soul as full of light as it is now!

II.

'But if that light, pure effluence from on high,
Fall into shadow ere thy morn be o'er,
Were it not better thus to see thee die
For me forlorn—for thee to wake no more?
If so thy soul might never taste of death
'Twere better I should sorrow for thy sake;
But if those fears are traitors to the faith
That sees in thee my better life—Awake!

III.

'And, see! thine eyes, twin stars that shine by day,
Unclose, with trust, and welcome, and surprise,
And from thy heart thy laughter breaks away
Swift, as from morning flowers their spirit flies;
Thou tell'st me all thy thoughts—thy cares, thy joy—
And thro' thy speech, as in a silver stream,
I can behold thy heart, thou gentle boy,
Clear as the sands that lie beneath and gleam.

IV.

'Thy radiant locks are stirring in the breeze,
Thine eager eyes are wandering far away
O'er the blue hills, and fields, and forest trees;
Thy heart beats quick as mine upon the day
When Nature first across my heartstrings pass'd
Her cunning hand, and Earth began to shine
With light from Heaven too magical to last,
Earnest of other Youth, and Life divine.

V.

'Young voices from without salute thine ear;
I will go forth with thee—I will take part
In thy glad toils and triumphs, and be near,
Shade of myself, still present where thou art;
In thee I'll strive and conquer, laugh and weep;
Gray Time shall pause upon his crutch to see,
Sad Memory bask until she fall asleep,
And pale Death vanish in the light from thee.

VI.

'Dear child, when I behold thy blissful brow,
Thy blooming lip, thy deep and shining hair,
Methinks, I am become again as thou,
Born once again into the days that were;
And this enchanted moment reawakes
The sparks within my heart from its cold embers,
No care bewilders, and no sorrow aches,
And it seems hoping that which it remembers.

VII.

'Thy limbs are fashion'd in the selfsame mould,
Thy tongue is tuned unto the very tone
Of those sweet years I shall no more behold;
Thy little face reminds me of my own;
Thy faults are shadows, and thy virtues too,
Thy thoughts take shape and color after mine,
But to first Truth thou ne'er shalt be untrue,
My heart's sad tears shall grow the fruits of thine.

VIII.

'My child, when I look down into thine eyes,
From those deep fountains of translucent blue
Methinks I see the antique shape arise
Of my own Youth in virgin zone anew;
There, where thy heart's fresh streams are flooding forth
Hope, like a wild and wondrous Ocean-daughter,
Her sovran beauty stainless of the earth,
Takes her delight in the resplendent water;

IX.

'Pure Love is lying in those azure streams,
His bow unbent, no spot upon his wings,
And star-eyed Poesy with skyward dreams,
Mirth without scorn, and Pleasure without stings;
Ill Shadows frown not here, nor Sorrows fling
Into those sun-lit wells their bitter tears,
But when I think of all that Time may bring,
I sigh, and tremble o'er the gulf of years.

X.

'The tiny rivulet in its narrow bed
Will gloom and brighten under sun and cloud
Oft as the waters from the fountain-head
Of deep Maranon, or the Plata proud;
Tho' few the records of thine early years,
My child, the motions of thy soul, that fill
Thine eye with light, or penitential tears,
Are morning shadows thrown from Good or Ill.

XI.

'The storm that rends the ancient oak in twain,
Sways the sweet blossom of the harebell under;
The flower will lift its gracious head again,
The mountain giant falls with sound of thunder;
And if that tender heart of thine outgrow
In its great Love, Ambition, or Despair,
The common measure of our ills below,
'Twill rend beneath the storm it cannot bear.

XII.

'Oh! may that trembling sense of Joy and Pain
Leave thee a manhood of serenest peace,
Like a clear noontide, when the gusty rain
Is ended, and the winds of Morning cease;
And may no shade of Sorrow backward roll
When thy long Day is o'er, and it is Even,
To over-cloud the Sunset of thy Soul,
And from thy vision hide the Deep of Heaven.

XIII.

'Oh! I will tread the ancient walks again,
From all waste places we will turn away,
And those rare blossoms that I pass'd in vain
Thou shalt not fail to gather day by day;
Thou shalt be strong where I am weak, my Son,
Where I am strong, my Son, thou shalt be more,
And if wild waves thy fortunes overrun,
Honor and Faith shall waft thy Soul ashore.'

AUTUMN SHADOWS.

NO. I.

I.

Ah! Death, if, ere thy shadow seals our eyes,
We could behold the unimagined shore
Where good things fly to, when their days are o'er,
Where Wit's sweet laugh, where Fancy's odorous sighs
Are treasured for us, where
Farewell, the piteous prayer,
Breathes hope beyond despair,
Where Mirth looks up again, and sings to morning skies;

II.

What bowers young Beauty, in her prime of May
By the sharp winds untimely overtaken,
Lights with her aspect, when she hath forsaken
The old Earth, like a blossom rapt away;
Where the last tender word
Of sever'd hearts is heard,
And Hope, till doom deferr'd,
Peeps thro' thy dusky gate, and looks into the Day;

III.

In what soft isles, near what low-breathed seas
All the sweet Nightingale's lost songs are heard;
Where parted Sunsets stay; where Love is stirr'd
With his first dreams; where flown Felicities
Live o'er their banquet hours;
Where Genius twines his flowers;
Where Freedom crown'd with towers
Walks, and her snow-white robe rolls in the light and breeze;

IV.

Oh! wouldst thou tell where are the dreams that fly
Forth from the strong hearts of the young, and fold
Their wings beneath the sorrows of the old;
Where are the visions of rapt Phantasy,
Who sees thro' fires of Even
Swift Shapes come down from Heaven,
And happy Souls forgiven
With wings, and lightning speed ascend into the sky:

V.

Where all blithe Welcomes on bright morns of Spring
Still echo, kindling sunny walks with cheer;
Where snatches of sweet song we sometimes hear
Like odors of wildflowers, or birds a-wing;
Flashes of Heaven that break
Our slumbers, and forsake
The brain, as we awake,
Like flying stars that pass, and leave us sorrowing:

VI.

Oh! wouldst thou, cruel Shadow, only tell
Where the old tongues the selfsame words remould,
Where the old eyes smile sweetly as of old;
Where is the blue-ey'd Child I loved so well,
Who slumber'd on my knee,
Till one gray morning she
Left the earth silently,
And Grief upon our home, a Summer shadow fell:

VII.

Where I shall look again on her who sate
Beside the hearthstone of mine ancestry,
Till her loved being grew a part of me,
Thro' all my years, and years beyond their date,
Where will that presence be
That is enshrined in me
Like Immortality?
Will that same brow, that smile, that welcome for me wait?

VIII.

Ah! then to them, that mourn for us and sigh,
Welcome would be the twilight of thy day,
'Twixt night and morn the cloud would roll away,
And dying eyes would lighten Victory!
Ah! then to living eyes
The face of one that dies
Would be as full of bliss
As sunset is of dawn across the Western sea.

AUTUMN SHADOWS.

NO. II.

I.

If Death should come at the appointed hour
Not with his fears, his phantoms, and his sighs,
His javelin, his pale scowl, and hollow eyes,
But like a bridegroom burnish'd from his bower,
Radiant with lovingkindness, and the flower
Of youthful beauty, and should gently say,
'Give me thy brother, or thy friend, to-day,
And I will give him deathless life and power;'

Wouldst thou not storm with sighs that Presence blest,
And clasp his knees, and cling unto his vest?
And cry, 'Oh! couldst thou give that other part
Of his own life, my sympathetic heart?
Are we not one? oh! will he never pine
For my remember'd eyes, and tones of mine?
Take him; but let my soul no longer be,
Or let it share his immortality!'

II.

If he should say 'O mortal, doom'd to war
With woe, of faint heart, and of feeble will,
Plumed with vain hopes no fortune shall fulfil,
His faithful eye shall seek thee from afar,
And into vales where living waters are
From sorrow he shall turn thy steps aside,
And from the shadow of the towers of Pride:
His winged soul shall reach thee from its star.'

'O Spirit, we are dwellers of one home,
Where shall I seek him in the deep To Come?
The Worlds are wide, and when farewell is said,
Can aught restore the living to the dead?
Ah! when I die, will he not mourn in Heaven,
In bliss, in light, if I be unforgiven?
And wherefore should we part to meet again
While I am damn'd to thoughts more dread than pain?

III.

If he should say 'Behold, thy friend is poor,
But I will give him all things: if he mourns
He shall be comforted, nor feel the scorns
Of Time, or taste of anguish any more:
Kind Spirits wait upon a sun-bright shore
To give him welcome: sorrow not, nor sigh,
I waft him where the happy islands lie,
And he shall feel no pain in passing o'er;'

Wouldst thou not crave one last look of that face
So long the bright lamp of thy dwelling place?
Say, would thy fond eyes following on the road,
Tho' it should vanish in the light of God,
Be lit with joyful smiles, or dim with tears?
Wouldst thou turn back, or stand with listening ears?
Tho' the last look with glory from the Throne
Should see his garments burn, wouldst not thou be alone?

FLIGHT OF THE SWALLOW

I.

THE golden-throated merle, and mellow thrush
Chant to us yet; the woodlark will not fly
His ancient sylvan solitude, or hush
His dewy pipings for a softer sky;
But the swallow flies away,
I would that I were he,
He follows the flown May
Across the sea.

II.

The swallow hath a fickle heart at best,
He bears off the sweet days he brought us o'er,
And sounds retreat like an ungrateful guest
That shuns the flatter'd host he sued before;
Should kind Mirth be forgot
When his dark locks are gray,
And Love remember'd not?
Ah! stay, ah! stay!

III.

Know ye of Gladness, that with jocund hearts
Can cast away old loves for love of new?
O friends, the music of a thousand arts
Charms not so sweetly as a voice that's true:
I sang ye songs of sorrow,
I sang ye songs of glee,
I cried, await to-morrow;
Ye heard not me.

IV.

Know ye of Sorrow? can ye understand
Mortality, that hung unto the robe
Of Summer, as she flies from land to land,
Follow swift Youth around the rolling globe?
Joy's winged heart is light,
But blind are his bright eyes;
Grief seeth in the night
Of tears and sighs.

V.

The feathers of Time's wings, ere yet they fall
Ye pluck, and from his plumes ye trim your own;
Ye answer to the Southwind's silver call,
Ah! whither wend ye, leaving me undone?
Ah! stay, dear friends, ah! stay,
And leave me not forsaken;
Care takes not the same way
That ye have taken.

VI.

In our lorn woods the morn and evensong
Will fail, and things of sunshine cease to be;
Lo! shrilling Winter leadeth Death along,
I see the tyrant shake his lance at me.
Delight hath fled the earth,
The evil days are come;
So I will light my hearth,
And sing at home.

VII.

Ye seek the blue isles, and the happy hills,
Ye rush into the heart of Summer skies,
Ye leave behind ye unremember'd ills,
Ye fly like happy souls to Paradise.
Oh! could ye, blissful things,
On my dark, utter day,
Lend me those selfsame wings
To flee away!

A DREAM OF AUTUMN.

I.

I HEARD a man of many winters say,
'Sometimes a sweet dream comes to me by night,
Fluttering my heart with pulses of delight,
In glory bright as day;

II.

''Tis not the song of eve, the walks of morn,
Nor hearth-lit jokes, nor lamp-lit revelries,
That haunt mine ears, and flit across mine eyes,
And mock my heart forlorn.

III.

''Tis not the memory of my school-day years,
The hours, when I was a wild-hearted boy,
Of stormy sorrow, and of stormy joy,
That fills mine eyes with tears.

IV.

'Tis not the stir of manhood, nor the pain,
The flood of passions, and the pomp of life,
The toils, the care, the triumphs, and the strife
That move my soul again;

V.

'Ah! no, my prison-gates are open thrown,
There is a brighter earth, a lovelier sun,
One face I see, I hear one voice, but one,
'Tis She, and She alone!

VI.

'It is a golden morning of the Spring,
My cheek is pale, and hers is warm with bloom,
And we are left in that old carven room,
And she begins to sing;

VII.

'The open casement quivers in the breeze,
And one large muskrose leans its dewy grace
Into the chamber, like a happy face,
And round it swim the bees;

VIII.

'Sometimes her sunny brow she loves to lean
Over her harp-strings; sometimes her blue eyes
Are diving into the blue morning skies,
Or woodland shadows green;

IX.

'Sometimes she looks adown a garden walk
Whence echoes of blithe converse come and go,
And two or three fair sisters, laughing low,
Go hand in hand, and talk.

X.

'And once or twice all fearfully she gazed
Up to her gray fore-fathers, grim and tall,
With faded brows that frown'd along the wall,
And steadfast eyes amazed.

XI.

She stays her song; I linger idly by;
She lifts her head, and then she casts it down,
One small, fair hand is o'er the other thrown,
With a low, broken sigh;

XII.

'I know not what I said; what she replied
Lives, like eternal sunshine, in my heart;
And then I murmur'd, Oh! we never part,
My love, my life, my bride!

XIII.

'And then, as if to crown that first of hours,
That hour that ne'er was mated by another,
Into the open casement her young brother
Threw a fresh wreath of flowers.

XIV.

'And silence o'er us, after that great bliss,
Fell, like a welcome shadow; and I heard
The far woods sighing, and a summer bird
Singing amid the trees;

XV.

'The sweet bird's happy song, that stream'd around,
The murmur of the woods, the azure skies,
Were graven on my heart, though ears and eyes
Mark'd neither sight nor sound.

XVI.

'She sleeps in peace beneath the chancel stone,
But ah! so clearly is the vision seen,
The dead seem raised, or Death hath never been,
Were I not here alone.

XVII.

'Oft, as I wake at morn, I seem to see
A moment, the sweet shadow of that shade,
Her blessed face, as it were loth to fade,
Turn'd back to look on me.'

LOVE AND THE POET.

I.

THE thunder roll'd o'er land and sea,
The storm howl'd over rock and river,
'The Past hath been, and shall not be
For ever, and for ever!'
Blue lightnings streaming over deserts vast
Glimmer on flying phantoms dimly shown,
And threatening spectres that pursue in haste
Thro' dismal aisles, and cities overthrown.

II.

Hark! 'tis the sound of War in heaven,
Death leads the armies of the air,
His Giants o'er the moonlight driven
Blow trumpets of despair;
I hear a cry as of departing Powers,
And ere the banners of the foe be furl'd,
Beauty and Strength shall perish with the hours,
'Mid the fall'n fragments of a ruin'd world.

III.

Three dead leaves of an aged vine
Tap doleful at my window-pane;
The cold stars shudder, as they shine
Thro' wind, and gusty rain;
Far off I hear the torrent waters thrown
Into the valley, like a battle-host,
The ancient forests in their sorrow groan,
And frighted Nature echoes 'I am lost!'

IV.

The voice of one forlorn and blind,
A piteous voice, yet golden-sweet,
Comes in the pauses of the wind,
And makes my heart to beat;
'Ah! Death, ah! Night, ah! whither shall I fly
To some fond heart, as in the days of old?
Take me, O friends, or surely I shall die,
The world is dark, and I am faint and cold!'

V.

A voice more solemn than the other
A tender voice, sublime in sadness,
Like brother speaking unto brother,
Soars thro' the storm's shrill madness;
'Come to me, I will shield thee from the wind,
Forsaken Wanderer, wheresoe'er thou art;
Come to my stricken heart, and thou shalt find
A home, and thou and I will never part.'

VI.

The thunder roll'd o'er land and sea,
The storm howl'd on o'er waste and city:
I knew that voice of agony,
I knew that voice of pity:
'Twas Love, fond Love, dejected and forsaken,
Seeking the Poet thro' the stormy clime;
'Twas the sad Poet by the night o'ertaken,
That found lost Love amid the wrecks of Time.

THE SONGS OF SORROW.

I.

I saw pale Sorrow in her Autumn bower,
Athwart its fluttering woof of sombre green
The flying banners of the Day were seen
Over cloud-walls that on the world did lower;
And the sad lustre of the twilight air
Shone thro' her falling tears and streaming hair.

II.

By the cold marble of her open tomb
She sate, and mourn'd; and when the wailing blast
Sway'd the dark ivy curtain, as it pass'd,
She raised her eyes, and peer'd into the gloom,
And smote her breast, and wept, and look'd afar
With folded palms towards the evening star.

III.

And she began to sing; her mystic chant
Shook down the last drops of a morning shower,
Drew forth the owl in silence from his tower,
And scared the nightingale from out his haunt;
Fall'n from the rustling darkness overhead
The raindrops mingled with the tears she shed.

IV.

She sang low ditties, desolate and sweet,
A tender mother pleading, old, and poor;
A bounteous sire turn'd from his daughter's door;
A little hungry child with bleeding feet;
Her only son from a poor widow taken;
Love, early love despised, and forsaken.

V.

A sobbing Echo mock'd her from a cave;
On sudden gusts she heard lamenting cries,
Far tumults, terrors, plaints, and agonies;
And faint afflicting tongues, as from the grave;
And forked fires upon the darkness scroll'd
Weird signs of woe, and muffled thunders knoll'd.

VI.

She sang great hearts by evil cares estranged;
A father's pride become his curse and shame;
Faithfulness slain, and dying without blame;
Kindness to Hate, and Grief to Madness chang'd:
Sadder the sunken sun began to glow,
Her voice grew fainter, and her heart more slow.

VII.

The mournful dirge of one slow village bell
Burthen'd her song, and the low evening wind;
With dusk-red poppyflowers she strove to bind
Her trembling brows—but one by one they fell
Earthward; again she wept, and look'd afar
With folded palms towards the evening star.

VIII.

Dimly she look'd from forth her ivy and bay;
Thro' loopholes of gray turrets, grim and bare,
The wild wind shrill'd like spirits in despair;
Deep down the plain a ruin'd city lay,
The stormy dust flew o'er its towers afar,
And wrathful clouds shut out the evening star.

IX.

Her voice rose keen upon the wind, like Pity
Pleading to Fate; she sang the old and blind
Wandering and poor, the last of all their kind;
She sang mad mothers in a stormed city
Sitting by their slain sons, and daughters fair
Dragg'd o'er the burning threshold by the hair.

X.

The wind rush'd down; the dark leaves overhead
Hiss'd like a sea; from battlements of thunder
Great signals flamed, and fill'd the twilight under
With doleful shapes, and shadows of the Dead;
Swifter across the waste the death-knoll swung,
Like Lamentation with an iron tongue.

XI.

She sang meek Virtue struck by her own hand;
Honor dishonor'd; Truth in strange attire
Flying forlorn, and Faith in burning fire;
And wild-eyed Ruin sweeping o'er the land;
And Horror with a hundred voices blown
On every wind, and Death upon a throne.

XII.

She shriek'd—the tempest answer'd from the skies,
Dark woods, and rushing waters from below,
To the storm-wind she bared her ancient brow,
And to the lightnings raised her awful eyes,
That show'd her a wreck'd world, all dim and dire,
And earthquake rocking mountain-peaks on fire!

XIII.

'Oh! heaven,' she cried, 'it is the end of Time,
And God is parting!' Great and terrible
Her voice went upwards in its last farewell
Above the torrent floods, and stormy clime,
Sad as an exiled Angel's, or a cry
Of God gone forth in mortal agony!

XIV.

Down by her tomb she fainted, and she fell;
The storm swept onwards—in her dreaming ears
Leaving sad murmurings like a sound of tears;
And Nature slumber'd at the midnight bell;
But still she heard the parted thunders roll
In echoes thro' the desert of her soul.

XV.

And there was silence after that great cry,
And Death stole forth from icy mountain-caves,
He laid his wand upon the eager waves,
And shed the forest leaves in passing by,
And the drear glitter of his moonlit bones
Whiten'd the stilly trees, and desert stones.

XVI.

But at the dawning birds began to sing,
And softer voices of a fairer wind;
The orient splendors trembled from behind,
She heard the music of a little spring:
She rose—She wept no more—She look'd afar
With folded palms towards the morning star.

TO SORROW.

I.

O Sorrow, whose inviolable soul
The God of all things made his dwelling-place,
Sorrow, whom all must look on face to face
Between their mortal barriers and the goal,
Whose is the infant's plaint, the funeral knell,
Thy voice is better than a marriage bell.

II.

Better it is to sit awhile with thee,
And listen to thy melancholy shell,
Than sound of festal harpings, and the swell
Of choral triumphs waxing like a sea;
Better it is to hear thy still small voice
Than Pæans thunder'd forth when Kings rejoice!

III.

O holy Sorrow, whom the iron Fates
Alone on earth pass by without a frown,
When I behold how rebel years discrown
Imperial Youth; how lordly Pleasure waits
To pass beneath Affliction's dungeon door;
I'll sit with thee, though thou be old and poor.

IV.

How Hope's blue eyes grow dim and blind with tears;
How Love unplumed, and crazy Mirth forlorn
Halt after winged Time pursued by Scorn;
How Vanity the last of Youth's frail peers
Arm'd with a crooked crutch, and wither'd wreath
Goes with Despair to fight the strength of Death;

V.

How Glory hears the echoes of his name
Die down the wind, that wafteth swiftly on
The thundering sound of victories newly won,
And triumphs louder in the throat of Fame;
Sorrow, in thy deep bower I'll sit with thee,
And hear thee sing of Immortality.

THE GOLDEN CITY.

PART I.

I.

Two aged men, that had been foes for life,
Met by a grave, and wept—and in those tears
They wash'd away the memory of their strife;
Then wept again the loss of all those years.

II.

Two youths discoursing amid tears and laughter
Pour'd out their trustful hearts unto each other:
They never met before, and never after,
Yet each remember'd he had found a brother.

III.

A boy and girl amid the dawning light
Glanced at each other at a palace door;
That look was hope by day, and dreams by night,
And yet they never saw each other more.

IV.

Should gentle spirits born for one another
Meet only in sad death, the end of all?
Should hearts, that spring, like rivers, near each other,
As far apart into the Ocean fall?

V.

Should heavenly Beauty be a snare to stay
Free Love, and ere she hear his tongue complain,
Forsake him, as a lily turns away
From the air that cannot turn to it again?

VI.

Ah! hapless Zephyr, thou canst never part
From the rare odor of the breathing bloom;
Ah! flower, thou canst not tell how fair thou art,
Or see thyself, or quaff thine own perfume.

VII.

Ah! Lover unbeloved, or loving not
The doomed heart that only turns to thee,
In this wild world how cureless is thy lot,
Who shall unwind the old perplexity?

PART II.

I.

FOND hearts, not unrequited shall ye be
For ever—I beheld a happy sight,
Heaven open'd, and a starry company
Far off, like Gods, and crowned Sons of Light.

II.

On beacon-towers, and citadels sublime
They stood, and watch'd with their unsleeping eyes
Where two or three across the sea of Time
Held on unto the shores of Paradise.

III.

All day they rock'd upon the stormy Deep,
Till night beset them; and they could not tell
The signal lights—and they began to weep—
And the dark waters smote them, and they fell.

IV.

But oh! they woke in wonder! and behold
A mighty City!—'twas a summer-morn,
And dazzling sunshine smote on walls of gold,
And blessed voices on their ears forlorn.

V.

Soon as the gray prow touch'd upon the sands
Wild birds from fadeless woods, and inland streams,
Shower'd o'er them those same notes of Faery lands,
Which they had heard in far, forgotten dreams.

VI.

And on the morning breezes come and part
Gushes of those enchanted melodies,
Which for brief moments born within the heart
Make sad the earth with echoes of the skies.

VII.

Odors from silent fields of Asphodel
Breathe o'er them, steeping them in sudden bliss,
That once had touch'd their sense, as with a spell,
And made them yearn for parted lives in this.

VIII.

Visions, which some pale bard had seen afar
Burn in the sunset, or the morning cloud,
And then depart into the scornful air,
Leaving his heart with earthly sorrows bow'd,

IX.

From forth broad portals into daylight pour'd,
While songs were peal'd, and trumpets stream'd above,
And by those shores in triumph took their way,
While he stood rapt in ecstacy and love.

X.

And men of sorrows, whose dejected eyes
Had sought the earth, and look'd for Death in vain,
Lifted their heads unto the glorious skies,
And sigh'd with perfect bliss, unthrall'd of pain.

XI.

And they were borne into a vale of bowers,
And heard infantine voices, and those tones
Link'd in their hearts with the rejoicing hours
Ere mortal anguish smit their weary bones.

XII.

Amid the tumult who are they that call
In well-known tongues sweet welcomes? Who are they
Amid the multitudes that throng the wall,
With well-known faces, now so young and gay

XIII.

Who are the foremost on the shore to find,
And clasp those weary mariners, pale with woes?
Friends, lovers, tender children, parents kind,
Lost soon as loved—or loved too long to lose.

XIV.

They took those storm-beat mariners by the hand,
And thro' their worn and weary senses pour'd
Sweet snatches of old songs, and to the land
They led them, whispering many a tender word.

XV.

Up to the golden Citadel they fare,
And as they go their limbs grow full of might,
And One awaits them on the topmost stair—
One whom they had not seen, but knew at sight!

XVI.

Hark! there is music, such as never flow'd
Thro' all the Ages—for the Lost are found—
Sorrow is sitting by the throne of God—
Justice and Mercy meet—and Love is crown'd!

A BIRD OF EVEN.

I.

Deeper the shadows frown;
The winds have furl'd their wings, and thro' the trees
Burns the red West; upon the flaming sky
Some purple clouds, like happy islands, lie,
Kiss'd by the ebbing tide of magic seas;
The crested hills are dark, the champaign and the town.

II.

Deeper the shadows spread;
Along the vineyards the last songs have ceased,
The mountain streams thro' rocky valleys torn
Moan from afar; but lo! the Ghost of Morn,
The breathless Moon soars thro' the sombre East,
And dimly shows the World, like Memories of the Dead.

III.

But one sweet Mourner keeps
Lone vigils; in that hour 'twixt Night and Day,
When the proud streams of the great sea of Light
Were ebbing slowly out of mortal sight,
I heard a wild bird in the twilight gray
Singing sad notes divine, like Love that wakes and weeps.

IV.

In gloom of cypress bowers
He sang apart of glories past away;
Oh! of young love he sang, of lovely things
Of Youth, of hopes flown by upon the wings
Of Sunset, of proud strength no arts could stay,
Of bliss no strength can bind, dead triumphs, crownless powers:

V.

The weary and heartbreaking
He sang, who see from off Time's dim gray shore
The sunken tide of the World's blessed years,
And thro' the twilight stretch their arms with tears
To those wing'd shapes that flee for evermore
Thro' amber gates of Eve, and leave the sad forsaken.

VI.

Then was there silence deep
  Like Death—and to the West the Moon descended;
    But when I heard no more that song forlorn,
    Ah! then it seemed that I was left to mourn,
  I only on the Earth, forgot, unfriended,
No heart should beat again, no eye awake from sleep.

VII.

No tongue should speak again—
  No loving eyes again look into mine—
    Nor silver stream be heard, nor winged breeze,
    Nor the sun soar again above the seas,
  On the hush'd World no resurrection shine,
And with Despair my heart lie as the moonless plain.

PAST AND FUTURE.

I.

THERE were some thoughts which made the new-born Time
Stretch forth its arms unto the Infinite,
And mighty Nature in her godlike prime
From this poor Earth climb to the gates of Light!

II.

When the first Prophet in his cavern shade
Heard the great voices of Futurity
Knoll like far thunders, and was not afraid—
And Cycles rolling like the tide o' the Sea!

III.

When the first Lawgiver in the Holy Land
Came forth from cloud and fire with awful eye,
And show'd the Tablets written with God's hand
To that astonish'd Host at Sinai!

IV.

When the first Poet in a blessed clime
Saw Heaven unfold, and spirits earthward borne,
And in the pauses of his voice sublime
Heard Glory streaming like the winds at morn!

V.

When the first Orator with armed soul
Stood like a present God of human minds,
And saw the passions of a People roll
Beneath him, like a sea before the winds!

VI.

When the first Patriot clothed in dust and blood
Rode by the walls of his own native town,
And look'd upon the citizens, as they stood
Thundering his name, and flinging garlands down!

VII.

But Thou shalt be more glorious than all these
Who shalt subdue Despair by any art,
Whose hand shall cope the pyramid of Peace,
And heal again sad Nature's broken heart;

VIII.

Shalt make Man walk, as if his God were near,
Stirr'd in the winds, and lighten'd in the sky;
And pale Guilt trembling with a sudden fear
Whisper unto his fellow—He is by!

IX.

Shalt lead Truth to her throne without the might
Of steel to force, or music to persuade,
Show Beauty changed into her acolyte,
And all the Muses at her footstool laid:

X.

Teach Pride to weep—teach Sorrow spells of cheer—
Teach all to feel a portion of that zeal
Ray'd from the Lamp upheld by Love and Fear,
Which Prophets felt, which raptured Poets feel!

XI.

Thou who shalt make unarmed Love to wield
The World's wide Empire, King without a throne,
Stronger than Death to vanquish, or to shield,
A silent Presence crown'd with Light alone!

TO THE POET.

I.

O GENTLE Poet, whosoe'er thou art,
Whom God hath gifted with a loving eye,
A sweet, and mournful voice, a tender heart,
Pass by the world, and let it pass thee by;
Be thou to Nature faithful still, and she
Will be for ever faithful unto thee.

II.

Let them disdain thee for thy just disdain;
Shield thou thy heart against the world accurst,
Where they discourse of joy, and ache with pain,
And babble of good deeds, and do the worst;
Shed dews of mercy on their wither'd scorn,
And touch their midnight darkness with thy morn.

III.

There blind Ambition barters peace for praise:
There Pride ne'er sleeps, nor Hatred waxeth old;
And dwarfish Folly can his cubit raise
To godlike stature on a little gold;
There Madness is a king, and ev'n the wise
Sell truth to simpletons, and live on lies;

IV.

There Pleasure is a sickly meteor-light,
A star above—a pestilence below;
There Knowledge is a cup of aconite,
That chills the heart, and makes the pulses slow;
Remorse, a scorpion's self-destroying sting,
Sorrow, a Winter without hope of spring.

V.

There Love's clear torch is quench'd as in a tomb,
Or bound for ever in a golden band
He drags, with eyes fix'd on his early doom,
Behind lean Avarice with the iron hand:
Fancy, that fill'd the woodlands with his glee,
Scorns at himself, and murmurs to be free.

VI.

There Justice mindless of her holy name,
Creeps o'er the slime with adder's ears and eyes,
Stirs with dark hand the World-involving flame,
Thirsteth for tears, and hungers after sighs;
There Honor is a game to lose or win;
And Sanctity a softer name for Sin.

VII.

For thee 'tis better to remain apart,
Like one who dwells beneath the forest green,
And listens far off to the beating heart
Of the wide world, all-seeing, though unseen;
In a cool cavern on a mountain side
With rare, sweet flowers, and virgin springs supplied.

VIII.

Hark thou the voices from the peopled plain
In tuneful echoes murmuring in thine ears,
Watch thou the sunshine mingle with the rain,
And mark how gladness interweaves with tears,
And ply thy secret, holy alchemy,
Like God, who gives thee work, when none are by.

IX.

And from the twilight of thy solitude
Note thou the lights and shadows of the sky,
And cast the mighty shapes of Evil and Good
In perfect moulds of Immortality,
Till they are seen from far, like mountain-light,
That burns on high, when all below is night.

THE POET'S HEART.

I.

When the Poet's heart is dead,
That with fragrance, light, and sound,
Like a Summerday was fed,
Where, Oh! where shall it be found,
In Sea, or Air, or underground?

II.

It shall be a sunny place;
An urn of odors; a still well,
Upon whose undisturbed face
The lights of Heaven shall love to dwell,
And its far depths make visible.

III.

It shall be a crimson flower
That in Fairyland hath thriven;
For dew a gentle Sprite shall pour
Tears of Angels down from Heaven,
And hush the winds at morn and even.

IV.

It shall be on some fair morn
A swift and many-voiced wind,
Singing down the skies of June,
And with its breath and gladsome tune
Send joy into the heart and mind.

V.

It shall be a fountain springing,
Far up into the happy light,
With a silver carol ringing,
With a magic motion flinging
Its jocund waters, starry-bright.

VI.

It shall be a tiny thing
Whose breath is in it for a day,
To fold at Eve its weary wing,
And at the dewfall die away
On some pure air, or golden ray,

VII.

Falling in a violet-bloom;
Tomb'd in a sphere of pearly rain;
Its blissful ghost a wild perfume
To come forth with the Morn again,
And wander through an infant's brain;

VIII.

And the pictures it should set
In that temple of Delight
Would make the tearless cherub fret
With its first longing for a sight
Of things beyond the Day and Night.

IX.

But one moment of its span
Should thicker grow with blissful things
Than any days of mortal Man,
Or his years of Sorrow can,
Though beggars should be crowned kings.

X.

It shall be a tuneful voice
Falling on a Lover's ear,
Enough to make his heart rejoice
For evermore, or far, or near,
In dreams that swallow hope and fear.

XI.

It shall be a chord divine
By Mercy out of Heaven hung forth,
Along whose trembling, airy line
A dying Saint shall hear on earth
Triumphant songs, and harped mirth!

XII.

It shall be a wave forlorn
That o'er the vast and fearful Sea
In troubled pride and beauty borne
From winged storms shall vainly flee
And seek for rest where none shall be.

XIII.

It shall be a mountain Tree,
Thro' whose great arms the winds shall blow
Louder than the roaring Sea,
And toss its plumed head to and fro;
But a thousand flowers shall live below.

XIV.

It shall be a kingly Star
That o'er a thousand Suns shall burn
Where the high Sabaoth are,
And round its glory flung afar
A mighty host shall swiftly turn.

XV.

All things of beauty it shall be—
All things of power—of joy—of fear;
But out of bliss and agony
It shall come forth more pure and free,
And sing a song more sweet to hear.

XVI.

For methinks, when it hath pass'd
  Thro' wondrous Nature's world-wide reign,
Perchance it may come home at last,
  And the old Earth may hear again
  Its lofty voice of Joy and Pain.

THE GARLANDS OF MEMORY.

I.

When Memory in the gloom of cypress bowers
Unwove her garlands, she laid down with sighs
Mournfully, one by one, the wither'd flowers
That were at morn the light of her sad eyes;
The wild buds she had gather'd had drunk up
Their matin dew, and died; gray dust of Death
Lay desolate in the Lily's silver cup,
The red Rose breathed not its voluptuous breath;

She said 'the light is dying,
'Tis nigh the end of Day,
Cease, heart, Oh! cease thy sighing,
We must away, away!'

II.

Their drooping graces, and their dusky hues,
Their faint sweets telling of the morning time,
Pleaded to her so well, she could not choose
But love them faded better than their prime;
She held them up before her aching sight,
She breathed fond sighs to spread them out again;
She laid their dim soft leaves across the light,
And gave them tender tears, like Autumn rain:
She sang 'the Sun is leaving
The blessed Summer-day,
Cease, heart, ah! cease thy grieving
We must away, away!'

III.

Then blamed she the swift Sun, whose eager touch
Had stolen all their beauty's early treasure—
The Wind, that had been wanton overmuch,
And drawn their life forth with excess of pleasure;
Her tears could not awake their bloom again,
In vain against her mournful heart they lay;
Her tenderest tears could wash away no stain,
Her beating heart but shed their leaves away:

She mourn'd 'the Sun is setting,
It is the end of Day,
Cease, heart, ah! cease regretting,
We must away, away!'

IV.

At last she found some leaves of Eglatere,
Whose circling spray had bound those flowers in one;
She said 'I will not weep, while thou art here,
Whose odor, and fresh leaf outlives the Sun;
Green wert thou in the early morning shine,
Green art thou still at even—a holy wreath
Of pale, sweet flowers for me thou still mayst twine,
When I go forth to be the bride of Death!'

She sigh'd, 'the Sun is set,
It is no longer Day;
Oh! heart, couldst thou forget!—
But, come, away, away!'

THE PHANTOM.

LAST even, when the sun was low,
I walk'd, where those bright waters flow,
Where we two wander'd long ago;

With sad, slow steps I linger'd o'er
The ancient woods, the river-shore,
Where thou, alas! art found no more;

The winds that shook the dying flowers,
The echoes stirring in the bowers,
Seem'd as the voices of those hours;

With raptured eyes I pierced the gloom,
With tears that might have thaw'd the tomb
I cried unto thy Spirit 'Come,'

'Come forth,' I cried, 'twixt hope and fear,
'It is the hour when none are near,
Oh! come, beloved, meet me here.'

The sere leaves flitting in the dell
Whisper'd scornfully, as they fell,
'Death is Death, immutable.

'Thou that wouldst with impious haste
Call the Spirit from the vast
Of Nature, and recall the past;

Can thy love unlock the earth?
Canst thou bid dry bones come forth,
And give dead dust another birth?

Relume the flowers that fallen be,
Bring back the odors as they flee,
Or set the sere leaf on the tree?

If the soul might come to-day,
And with its old companions stay,
And tell them what the Angels say;

Such converse couldst thou live and bear,
That deep-eyed presence standing there
Love, even Love would never dare:

Weep not the past, but hope instead;
Mourn not, nor be discomforted,
The Living cannot love the Dead.'

The low winds murmur'd, as they went
'Sigh not, weep not, be content,
Death is Death, can he relent?'

Still I cried, 'twixt hope and fear,
'It is even, none are here,
Awake, beloved—come anear.'

Was it sad fancy's dreaming eyes,
Or an answer to my sighs?
Methought I saw a shadow rise.

Slowly it pass'd into the gray,
With mournful eyes half turn'd away;
And I heard a pale voice say,

In tones beyond imaginings,
As when the wind with tangled wings
Is fluttering amid tuneful strings,

'The Living cannot know the Dead,
But the Spirit that is fled
In good things past is perfected:

The bliss of life it felt before
Thrills the Spirit o'er and o'er,
Love increaseth more and more;

Never sorrow, never fear;
I am near thee, ever near,
Wakeful, more than eye or ear;

Sometime, dearest, we shall greet
Each other in this valley sweet—
The Future and the Past shall meet;

Sometime, we shall linger o'er
These ancient woods, this river-shore,
These walks where I am found no more;

Sometime, when the sun is low,
We shall wander, well I know,
Where we two wander'd long ago.

THE HOLYTIDE.

PART I.

I.

THE days are sad, it is the Holytide:
When flowers have ceased to blow, and birds to sing,
Where shall the weary heart of Man abide,
Save in the jocund memories of the Spring?
As the gray twilight creeps across the snow,
Let us discourse of walks when leaves are green;
Methinks the roses are more sweet that blow
In Memory's shade, than any that are seen.

II.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
Drear clouds have hid the crimson of the West,
And, like the winged Day, Delight hath died
Within me. and proud Passions gone to rest.
In this dusk hour, before the lamps are lit,
Thro' the Heart's long long gallery I will go,
And mark pale Memory's taper fall on it
Starting strange hues, like firelight on the snow.

III.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
Ye, whom I may not see for evermore,
Oh! I will dream, tho' Death's great waste is wide,
That ye may hear me from your silent shore.
And ye who wander, and are far apart,
(Oh! this great World is bleak, and years are growing,)
I have a sunny corner in my heart
Where I do set ye when rough winds are blowing.

IV.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
There is a welcome in the porch—I hear
The voice of one that I have loved and tried,
A voice I have not heard this many a year.
Ah! me, that face is as the wither'd flowers,
Paler with pain, with sorrows more forlorn,
But still the smile, the soul of other hours,
Shines from that face, the Even like the Morn.

V.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
We speak together while the daylight dies;
I see not he is old, for to my side
The ghost of Youth comes up between our sighs;
The charm is broken by a single word—
He answers—'thou wilt hear no more on Earth
The faithful voice that we so oft have heard,
Or see that face that was the Sun of Mirth.'

VI.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
Now let the last words of departed friends
Be sweeter to thee than a singing bride,
Weigh hearts, and for oblivion make amends;
Spurn not the penitent with haggard eye,
Seat thou the hungry outcast by thy chair,
The son whose Spring hath fled in tempest by,
The weeping daughter with dishevell'd hair.

VII.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
Let Wealth, and Glory, as they take their fill,
Think how Mischance to Fortune is allied,
Let Hope look up again thro' cloud of ill;
Let us look down into our children's eyes,
And think amid the mirth, and festal flow,
How once we were as they are—think with sighs
Of them that were as we are, long ago.

VIII.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
Cleanse off the ills of Time, the hates of years,
Hush forked Scorn, and vail the crest of Pride,
Kiss humble Love, and wipe away his tears;
Let vain things be forgot for evermore,
Let good things rise from out these mournful days,
Bring out forsaken memories from thy store,
If there be any pity, any praise.

IX.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
Ah! let the Grief, that knocks against thy gate,
Sit by thy heart, and murmur at thy side,
Think of Truth, think of Mercy, think of Fate;
Think what kind dews have fallen on thy head,
What thou shouldst do, but what thou hast not done;
Cast out the flaunting Sirens that have led
Thy heart, and once for all, and everyone.

X.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
Hark! in the drifting tempest, and the roar
Of darkling waters, are the Powers that guide
The wreck of Nature to a Summer shore;
Let Man too in the darkness arm, and strive
With the dark host within him, rise and fight,
And, ere the morrow morn, begin to live,
Sorrow brings strength, as Day is born of Night.

XI.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
The Sun is on the hearth, the World at home;
Over the frozen heath the Whirlwinds ride;
Drink to the Past, and better days to come;
Wreathe we our goblets with the evergreen,
Fadeless as Truth, sad as Humanity;
Let no bright flower, nor wither'd leaf be seen;
These Hours are sisters to Adversity.

XII.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
The Wintermorn is short, the Night is long;
So let the lifeless Hours be glorified
With deathless thoughts, and echoed in sweet song:
And thro' the sunset of this purple cup
They will resume the roses of their prime,
And the old Dead will hear us, and wake up,
Pass with dim smiles, and make our hearts sublime!

XIII.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
Be dusky misletoes, and hollies strown,
Sharp as the spear that pierced his sacred side,
Red as the drops upon his thorny crown;
No haggard Passion, and no lawless Mirth
Fright off the sombre Muse—tell sweet old tales,
Sing songs, as we sit bending o'er the hearth,
Till the lamp flickers, and the memory fails.

XIV.

The days are sad, it is the Holytide:
But ere we part this blessed night, to dreams
Of Angel songs on the hushèd mountainside,
And wondrous Shapes that came upon the light,
Let us lift up our voices all together
In one deep harmony, a rapt farewell,
So sweet we shall not hear the stormy weather,
And dying Sorrow wake to hear it swell.

PART II.

I.

AH! me, I never left a merrymaking,
Or saw kind friends go laughing from the door,
But under all my mirth my heart was aching
To think that happy day could rise no more.

II.

To-day hath been the harvest of the heart,
From far and near mine old companions met,
And now the gate stands wide, and they must part,
Leaving me here 'twixt triumph and regret.

III.

The nimble wit that might not be withstood,
The song, the merry tale, the jokes like rain,
The untamed laughter tingling in the blood,
The selfsame moments ne'er can fall again.

IV.

Haply as bright a hearth shall burn again,
As fair a company around it sit,
Children, and bright-eyed maids, and joyous men,
As warm the welcome, and as bright the wit;

V.

But ah! who can unlock the barred Morrow,
Or see what fates lie hid in flattering years,
No cheerier hearth can glow than this—but Sorrow
May cloud with sighs, or quench it with her tears.

VI.

Tho' the bright drops of the swift-flowing River
See us no more, we do not weep for them,
For others like to them come up for ever,
Tho' every drop be lovely as a gem.

VII.

When Summer nightingales have ceased to sing,
And Autumn storms have quench'd their tongues of flame,
If throstles chant, we can await the Spring,
We mourn not that their songs are not the same.

VIII.

Day yields to night, and days as fair are born,
But, O dear friends, will my forlorn regret
Bring back your absent faces like the Morn,
And some of ye are gone since last we met.

IX.

Not idly have I drank your faithful words,
Your hopes, your fears, your sorrows freely spoken,
I tell ye they will echo, till the chords
Of this old solitary heart are broken.

X.

Oh! when I look'd on them I loved of old,
I heard the many tongues of life-long years,
There were the proud grown meek, the fearful bold,
Sighs born of joy, and songs the end of tears.

XI.

Some there had fought the fight, and others lay
Like Warriors arm'd, that helmed vigils keep,
And wait the rising of a battle-day
To win them Honour—iron ev'n in sleep.

XII.

And some with Death were wrestlers day by day,
And slept with Sorrow—sisters of Despair,
Who smile serenely, knowing none can stay
Their sombre steps to Him—their Hope is there.

XIII.

Who love to laugh, because it stills the cry
Of lamentation piercing thro' the whole,
Who love to speak, but only with a sigh
Whisper the sleepless voices of the Soul.

XIV.

There is that holy thing, sweet Children's mirth,
Which they can only feel, nor feel for long,
That light from glories older than the Earth,
Heart-broken Nature's one diviner song.

XV.

And there were Children grown to mighty Men,
And plumed with hopes both beautiful and dread;
And some that I shall never see again;
Some newly widow'd, and some newly wed.

XVI.

And some could laugh and sing like revellers,
And yet beneath the festal robe and flowers
Close by the heart they held a hundred scars,
Mintage of painful Youth, and cruel hours.

XVII.

Honor to them! who for their earthly brothers
Can veil their sorrows with a rosy crown,
And without Hope can make it spring in others,
And comfort cares, the likeness of their own.

XVIII.

And one—but his bright promise has been shed
By evil thunders, like March blossoms torn
Untimely—and he bears a wreath instead
Of glittering poisons lifted as in scorn.

XIX.

Look in his eye, and in it ye may see
The tortured Spirit, like a whirling flame,
Burn with a light that is not Hope or Glee,
But Pride, that scoffs at thought, and tramples shame.

XX.

Look in his heart—it is a Cavern dim
Where doleful things in endless twilight be—
And by the little light that enters in
See the waste waters of a sunless sea.

XXI.

Yet is there one who leans upon his arm—
Ah! sweet pale blossom of a tangled brere,
Who breathest out rare odor in the storm,
Sweet Pity pleading to an iron ear,

XXII.

Thy deeds are written in the sealed Book
Tho' darkness to the World—while thou dost wake,
By all good Angels he is not forsook,
Let him be welcome—welcome for thy sake.

XXIII.

Daughter of Darkness, lovely as a star,
Who passest meekly thro' the unheeding crowd,
Thy Beauty and thy Love like sunbeams are,
Sweeter, because they reach us thro' a cloud.

XXIV.

But who is there? I see an aged man—
And there are other scars than those of Time
Dinted into his brow—his lips are wan,
But dark his cheek with many a care and clime.

XXV.

Alas! is this the playmate of my youth,
Foremost in mirth or peril, swift and bold,
The first in all mad ventures, and in truth
A heart and frame that never should grow old?

XXVI.

Is this the Head of Armies I behold
With that dim eye, gray head, and wither'd hand,
Whose name is wonderful, whose fame is roll'd
On waves of Song, and over Sea and Land?

XXVII.

He took me by the hand—we sate apart—
He told me all the tempest of his life,
His fiery trials of the Head and Heart,
Hot nights of care, and thunderdays of strife.

XXVIII.

Awful his accents sounded in mine ears
As the last moan of stormy winds at Even,
When the torn forest weeps its angry tears,
And bloodred sunset lights the piled Heaven.

XXIX.

And as a Spirit that has snatch'd a sight
Thro' Hellgate, and hath heard the utter woe,
And bears upon his face the dreadful light,
And hears the torment wheresoe'er he go,

XXX.

His whisper'd words are echoes of alarms,
The momentary lightning of his eye
Comes to me like the distant flash of arms,
A World of Sorrow hovers on his sigh.

XXXI.

He lifts his arm—he shows me, and I see
A midnight shore—a city on a height—
And burning towers that fall into the sea,
And flying hosts whose terrors cleave the night.

XXXII.

Faint Age that clasps the knees of armed men,
And mazed Innocence that yearns to play
With the pale fingers it unclasps in vain,
And seeks the breast where just before it lay.

XXXIII.

A lifted sword—a banner on the wall—
A youth with eager aspect—then a cry
Drown'd in the flood that overwhelms his fall—
'He was my firstborn—but 'twas Victory!'

XXXIV.

Temples, the glory of a thousand years,
Arts that no toil could match, no wealth could buy,
Whole Ages sank that night in blood and tears,
'My friends were dead—but it was Victory

XXXV.

That night a stripling with the dead was laid,
An only child—no other wealth he had
But the fond vows of his true-hearted maid,
And mother's blessing when she kiss'd the lad.

XXXVI.

Now his few days were ended—but a tear
Was frozen on his cheek, and in his hand
He held a ringlet of her sunny hair
Still clutch'd in anguish when he grasp'd the sand.

XXXVII.

In their lone cot upon the mountain slope
Sate that sad maid and mother—one would sigh,
The other look'd, and smiled, and bade her hope,
'He must return—for it is Victory!'

XXXVIII.

One burning tear roll'd o'er the wasted cheek
Of that old man—he parted, and I mourn'd—
Oh! where shall he find what the weary seek
The peace he troubled, and the rest he scorn'd?

XXXIX.

Another comes, who, since his heart beat high
With hope and promise, as a Mayday Morn,
Hath conquer'd—and he too hears Victory!
Shouted into his ears, but is forlorn.

XL.

His was another warfare, other arms;
He strove with Spirits, and he won the fight
With music, and with beauty, and the charms
Of woven arts, and thoughts like shafts of light.

XLI.

Downward he gazes, with his eyes in tears,
Upon the perils of that rocky way
That lifted him to Honor, and he hears
Like far off music, the first note of praise.

XLII.

His sense is dead—the odors of the green
That others breathe, the songs they hear, are lost
Upon him now—yet their delight hath been
Dearest to him, for he hath felt it most.

XLIII.

There is a silence on the topmost peak,
The mighty purpose, and the earnest will,
That shadow'd all things, while they were to seek,
Sleep, like the thunders underneath the hill.

XLIV.

But here is solitude with icy cold,
Or loveless light—his blessed Youth is gone—
Go back he cannot—and his Pride must hold
With weary gripe the sceptre he hath won.

XLV.

Perchance he thinks, and shudders at that thought,
That all he hath done is but done in vain,
Around the pyramid that he hath wrought
To his own glory, howl Misery and Pain.

XLVI.

The marble Beauty smiling at the top
What hath it done to shield the shafts of Fate,
To lull the smart of Anguish, kindle Hope,
To solace Hunger, or to vanquish Hate?

XLVII.

His Earth is growing dark, his Sun is dim,
The golden sceptre trembles in his hand,
The very Mountaintop rocks under him,
For it is slipping from its base of sand.

XLVIII.

Perchance he sees, now that his eyes are clear,
All that Ambition spurring in his haste
Drives by unmark'd; he cannot bring them near,
And Death is standing 'twixt him and the Past.

XLIX.

Ah me! the little lovely wayside flowers,
The dewy blossoms breathing in his face,
The springs that murmur'd under quiet bowers,
The wildbirds piping out of lonely ways.

L.

Maybe, some gentle face comes to his mind,
A lowly flower that turn'd to him its day,
Some tender, loving heart, too fondly blind,
That shrank, and perish'd, as he turn'd away.

LI.

He sees the mountain village where she sleeps,
Far as that memory, lovely as that feeling,
And though he wept not then—ah! now he weeps,
Inly he weeps—but hark! the Music pealing.

LII.

And it is She who sings, that mournful Maid
That dove-eyed daughter of hard-hearted Pride,
All that her eyes had left untold, is said;
Methinks I hear an Angel at his side.

PART III.

I.

'FAREWELL!' she sang—her sweet voice seemed to run
Along the surface of the Sea of Sound,
Like the last glories of the setting Sun,
That strikes the Deep, and flies from bound to bound.

II.

I closed mine eyes—and in the dark went forth
As 'twere the cry of this lamenting Sphere
Issuing at midnight 'twixt the Heaven and Earth,
A cry of Love, Faith, Anguish, Hope, and Fear.

III.

'Farewell!'—and the far-fluttering notes were drown'd
In floods of music, like the lark in light,
And when the choral thunders ceased to sound,
That voice soar'd forth again in endless flight.

IV.

Again the deeper Voices rolling under
Took up the sound; and still that fiery tongue
Burn'd, like new lightnings striking thro' the thunder,
And rose alone above the quiring throng.

V.

'Farewell!'—and now, methought, her face from far
Look'd o'er the battlements of cloud-built towers;
Bright in angelic beauty, pure of care,
And threw back garlands of Earth-gather'd flowers.

VI.

Bluebells of Hope, Beauty that early blows,
And Fancy's wondrous blossoms of all hues,
Friendship's green leaf, and Passion's crimson rose,
All lovely things it seem'd so sad to lose.

VII.

'Farewell!' she sang—and higher still and higher
Her soul seem'd passing on that voice sublime
To other Being—as the heat of fire
Up o'er the flame invisibly will climb.

VIII.

'Farewell!'—and the last sweet departing thrill
Of that enraptured utterance seem'd to say,
'Look on me now; I feel not dole or ill;
Come to me, suffering Spirits, come away.'

PART IV.

I.

It is the dawning of a funeral day,
Put out the lights, and cast away the flowers,
And bid the merry Minstrel cease his lay,
Or sing the deathsong of these festal hours.

II.

The jocund Hours I loved to entertain
Mantle themselves to leave the festival,
And gaily part with songs, but I remain
Lone in the centre of my banquet-hall.

III.

Oh! ere ye part, come, let me look once more,
My well-beloved Guests, while yet I stand
Your Host beneath the lintel of the door,
Into your eyes, and take me by the hand;

IV.

And as ye past me into darkness move,
I shall remember the last look ye cast,
And ye shall take some token of my love
Precious and pure, for it must be the last.

V.

Ah! sure in all our revels I ne'er heard,
Until this bitter moment of Farewell,
Your tongues so sweet as on that mournful word,
Nor on mine eyes such beauty ever fell,

VI.

As now from those reverted eyes ye shower
Soften'd with tears that answer to my own,
Thro' the chill shadows of this twilight hour,
Leaving me with mute Memory here alone.

PART V.

I.

At midnight rose a mighty Wind, and spread
Like Lamentation over Land and Sea,
It seem'd a mournful Voice that said to me—
'Time sorroweth, and will not be comforted,
Because his youngest-born is dead, is dead!
His diadem of golden-linked Hours
Is fallen to the dust, and all its flowers
Are scatter'd—mourn ye for that lovely Head!

'I saw the Giant stand with folded wings
At noon of Night upon the River-shore,
Hard by the tumult where the Torrent flings
Its waters seaward, that are seen no more;
I mark'd the Spectre sailing swiftly down
Into the Ocean without robes or crown—

II.

'He was a Conqueror terrible and strong
In Life—and he is beautiful in Death;
He was a Poet with harmonious breath;
He was a Lover with a charming tongue;
His festal nights, his triumphs, and his songs,
Mourn ye—his beauty to the Deep descended;
His very tears are sweeter, being ended,
Than aught that to Futurity belongs.

'Futurity is dark, the Past is dim:
He was the fairest out of all his race;
In strength and glory none were like to him,
Mourn—for to-day ye saw him face to face;
And let us sing a dirge about his grave,
And speak good words of one we cannot save.'

THE END.

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